# POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS, PUBLIC MANAGEMENT, AND BUREAUCRATIC PERFORMANCE:

# POLITICAL-BUREAUCRATIC INTERACTIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON POLICY OUTCOMES

A Dissertation

by

DANIEL P. HAWES

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2008

Major Subject: Political Science

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# ABSTRACT

Political Institutions, Public Management, and Bureaucratic Performance: Political-Bureaucratic Interactions and Their Effect on Policy Outcomes. (August 2008)

Daniel P. Hawes, B.A., University of Texas – Pan American

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Kenneth J. Meier

This project examines the determinants of political responsiveness to bureaucratic performance. A large literature exists that has examined how bureaucratic agencies are responsive to political institutions. While policy theory contends that the reverse is also true – that is, political institutions engage in political assessment of policies – there is little empirical literature examining this important question. Indeed, research in public administration suggests that political responsiveness only occurs following massive bureaucratic failure or policy crises. Using data from Texas public school districts, this dissertation explores the role of policy salience in determining the likelihood of political responsiveness to bureaucratic outputs and outcomes.

The findings suggest that issue salience is the key determinant of political involvement in administration. Furthermore, this project incorporates the concepts of descriptive and substantive representation in examining these questions. The results indicate that policy salience depends on the composition of the interests of political institutions. Furthermore, race and ethnicity work to shape those preferences and, in turn, condition what policy makers deem as salient. The findings suggest that

descriptively unrepresentative political institutions are less likely to be responsive to the needs of those who are not represented (e.g. Latino students). Thus, representation is central to political responsiveness when the policy outputs or outcomes in question are not universally salient.

Finally, this project examines whether political institutions can influence policy outcomes, and, more importantly, what factors – environmental, organizational, managerial – either facilitate or constrain the political influence of elected officials. The findings suggest that goal and preference alignment between political institutions and bureaucratic agencies is critical in enhancing political influence – a finding that is commonly argued in formal models of political control, but rarely tested empirically. This research also finds that bureaucratic power or independence can work to hinder political influence of policy outputs.

For my family.

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There are many individuals I would like to thank, as they have all been instrumental to this project and my academic success in general. First and foremost, I would like to thank my beautiful and talented wife, Angie. I would not be where I am except for her. Angie's constant support, sacrifice and unmatched understanding have been a true inspiration to me and our family. I owe all I have to her.

I would also like to thank my family. This includes my in-laws, who have always been supportive and whom I consider my own family. I would like to thank my Dad for always being supportive and stepping up to help in whatever way necessary. With respect to my academic career, the support and guidance of my mentor, Ken "Cap'n Smooth" Meier, has been invaluable. Ken's generosity – both financially and with his time – has greatly bolstered my academic success. The experiences and training I received under Ken's mentorship will stay with me throughout my career, both in my research and my interactions with future students.

I would also like to thank Jerry Polinard at the University of Texas – Pan American, my alma mater. Dr. Polinard piqued my interest in normative questions related to issues of equality and equity in government and eventually convinced me to switch majors as an undergraduate. Similarly, Bobby Wrinkle (of UTPA) introduced me to the empirical world of political science and was always generous with his time as I worked on my honors thesis.

I would also like to thank Texas A&M University and the Department of Political Science for their continual support of their graduate students. In particular, I

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Graduate school would not have been what it was without the other graduate students who worked through the process with me. These include Alisa Hicklin, Rene Rocha, Greg Hill, and Erin Melton. Also, Laron Williams, Tyler Johnson, and Jason Smith. There are many others – too many to name – that have contributed to my experiences – both academically and personally. I thank you all.

# NOMENCLATURE

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| TEA | Texas Education Agency |
| FEMA | Federal Emergency Management Agency |
| NASA | National Aeronautics and Space Administration |
| EPA | Environmental Protection Agency |
| NRC | Nuclear Regulatory Commission |
| FTC | Federal Trade Commission |
| FDA | Food and Drug Administration |
| EEOC | Equal Employment Opportunity Commission |
| NALEO | National Association of Latino Elected Officials |
| SBEC | State Board for Educator Certification |
| AEIS | Academic Excellence Indicator System |
| TAKS | Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills |
| THEA | Texas Higher Education Assessment |
| TEXES | Texas Examination of Educator Standards |
| SAT | SAT Reasoning Test (formerly the Scholastic Aptitude Test) |
| ACT | ACT College Entrance Exam (formerly American College Testing) |
| AP | Advanced Placement Courses |
| ESL | English as Second Language |
| OLS | Ordinary Least Squares |

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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

Following the Columbia Space Shuttle disaster, NASA's space program come under intense public scrutiny, resulting in Congressional numerous hearings and independent investigations. Similarly, the government's handling of Hurricane Katrina prompted Congress to hold over 30 congressional oversight hearings relating to government spending on federal preparedness and responsiveness to disasters alone (Project on Government Oversight 2008). These hearings resulted in significant changes in the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) including the resignation of its chief administrator. Similarly, Congress held numerous oversight hearings and created an ad hoc committee to review and investigate the Federal Drug Administration's (FDA) 1999 approval of the now-recalled drug Vioxx, which allegedly caused heart attacks in tens of thousands of Americans. The committee's recommendations included the introduction of significant structural and procedural changes to the FDA.

These examples all depict Congress as an institution that is actively involved in monitoring and assessing the activities and performance of bureaucratic agencies. Indeed, this is arguably the primary role of elected officials, that is, to ensure the public goods and services provided by government are in fact consistent with the will of the people (e.g. Locke 2004 [1689]: Rousseau 1968 [1762]). Whether or not political elites

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This dissertation follows the style of *American Journal of Political Science*.

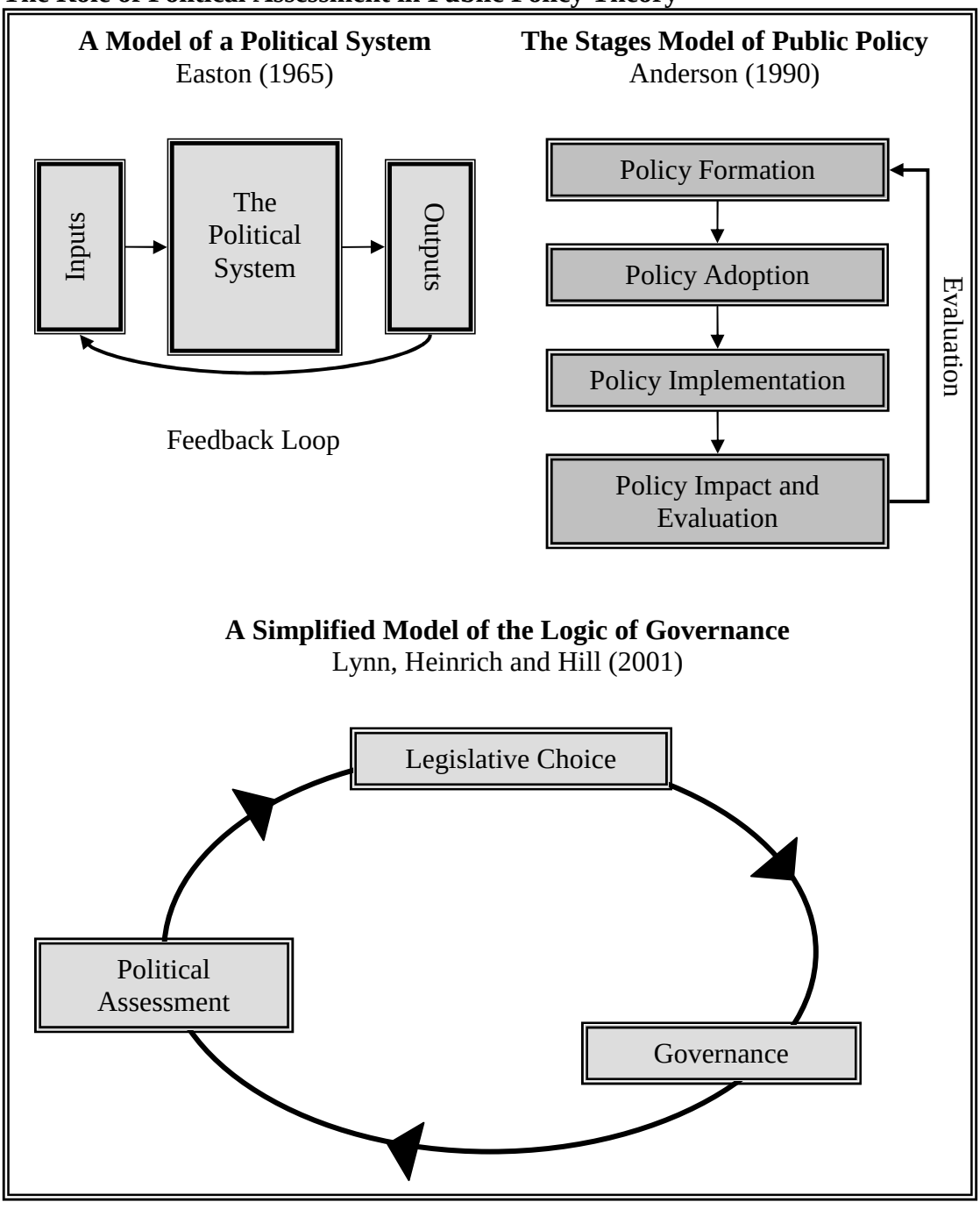
actively or systematically engage in policy assessment is an important question this dissertation engages empirically.

Bureaucratic accountability to the public is a core concern for political scientists, public administration scholars and policy-makers alike. The founding of the scientific studies of public administration and political science were both largely rooted in questions of governmental accountability (e.g. Wilson 1887). Thus, examining the determinants of governmental responsiveness and accountability is a worthwhile endeavor.

**Political Assessment**

Much of the policy literature assumes that public policy is the result of interactions among a set of connected actors whose preferences, goals, and choices shape policy outputs and outcomes. These actors are often conceptually arranged by hierarchy, functional levels, or temporal stages; yet, regardless of how they are organized, the ultimate process is that of a circular system. That is, decision-makers base their current decisions, in part, on their assessment of past outputs. This process of assessment is a key aspect of public policy making in virtually all of the policy literature, although it may have different labels. Figure 1.1 depicts three prominent theoretical frameworks of the policy process. Easton (1965) envisioned the policy process as a system where the external environment placed pressures on political systems. These environmental inputs take the form of either demands or support, which then enter the political system, resulting in outputs (i.e. the black box model of public policy).

**Figure 1.1.**
**The Role of Political Assessment in Public Policy Theory**



However, a vital component to Easton's model is the feedback loop by which system outputs then shape the inputs as policy stakeholders and decision-makers adjust their policy preferences and choices. Anderson's (1990) stages framework also explicitly incorporates policy evaluation as a key component to the policy making process. Furthermore, Lynn, Heinrich and Hill (2001) also argue that political assessment is a central aspect to governance, in that it informs legislative decision-making.

Yet, empirical research on bureaucratic failure argues that political actors infrequently pay attention to bureaucratic policy outputs and outcomes; that is, systematic assessment of bureaucratic activities and outputs, they argue, is not present (e.g., Caiden 1991; Bovens et al. 1999). Rather, political institutions tend to only respond to politically salient policy outputs and outcome, and often only after massive failure occurs. This suggests that the way we theoretically envision political assessment may not play out empirically. Political assessment may be more sporadic than systematic and more selectively reactive than comprehensive.

This project asks three general questions related to political responsiveness and bureaucratic accountability. First, do political institutions actively engage in systematic assessment of public policy outputs and outcomes? When bureaucratic failure occurs, do elected officials respond; or do they only respond when the failure is catastrophic? Second, to what extent does political assessment occur when the policy in question is not politically salient to the elected institution? Put differently, what role does electoral

representation of constituent interests play in the political assessment process? Finally, to what extent do bureaucratic factors constrain or facilitate the ability of elected officials to achieve their policy goals?

These three broad questions are addressed in a governance framework, which attempts to incorporate all the levels of governance that are involved in the production of public policy goods and services. Chapter II outlines this theoretical approach. Chapter III examines the first question, namely, to what extent does political assessment actually occur. That is, do elected institutions systematically assess policy outputs and outcomes? Do they systematically respond when outcomes deviate from the publics' will as expressed by the preferences of elected representatives? Furthermore, does a response from elected officials result in changes in administrative behavior? Are administrative agencies responsive to pressures from elected institutions? If so, is responsiveness reflected in changes in policy outcomes? This chapter is innovative in that, rather than only examining whether *bureaucratic* agencies respond to political institutions, it also examines whether *political* institutions are responsive to bureaucratic behavior and performance.

Chapter IV examines whether political institution respond to bureaucratic outputs when the policy in question is not necessarily politically salient to the general public. In particular, Chapter IV considers the case where bureaucratic outputs disproportionately negatively affect one particular group (Latinos) compared to another (Anglos). This chapter examines the role of political representation in such a case of group-specific

failure. If the interests of the group that is affected are not represented in the elected body, do political actors still respond to the bureaucratic failure? Chapter IV provides evidence highlighting the importance of descriptive representation in political institutions as a necessary condition for political assessment to occur when the policy area examined is not universally salient.

The final empirical chapter examines the conditional nature of political influence. While there is still some debate over exactly *how* political actors influence bureaucratic behavior (e.g. deck-stacking, structure, etc.), the empirical evidence supporting the broader claim that political institutions *can* influence bureaucratic behavior and outputs is overwhelming (e.g. Wood 1988; Wood and Waterman 1991, 1994; Moe 1985). What is less clear, however, is what role the bureaucracy plays in either enhancing or constraining political influence. This is an area that is vastly understudied (for some exceptions see Whitford 2002a, 2002b; Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner 2003). Chapter V examines a set of bureaucratic and managerial factors that may condition the relationship between political preferences and policy outputs or outcomes.

**School Districts as Political Systems**

The units of analysis for this dissertation are Texas school districts. This project treats public school districts as bureaucracies and political systems. Some may argue they are one but not the other, or that they are neither; hence, a brief defense of this nomenclature is warranted. A scholar of bureaucracy would be hard-pressed to find a uniform definition in the literature of what a bureaucracy or a bureaucrat is. Max

Weber's (1946) conceptualization of bureaucracy entailed hierarchy of authority, specialization, procedures and authoritative jurisdiction. Similarly, Friedrich and Cole (1932) argued bureaucracy is an administrative system based on professionalism and the formal structure of the organization. Downs (1965) provides a more specific definition where he defines a bureaucrat as "any person who works for a large organization; receives a money income from that organization which [*sic*] constitutes a major part of his total income; is hired, promoted or retained primarily on the basis of his role performance; and produces outputs which [*sic*] cannot be evaluated on a market" (440). Downs contends that a bureaucrat does not inherently have to work for a bureaucracy; rather, it is this set of criteria that defines a bureaucrat. Thus, while there is not a universal definition of what constitutes a bureaucracy, in a preponderance of instances, schools do fit the definitional criteria established in the literature. Indeed, in his book entitled *Bureaucracy*, Wilson (1989) – who does not provide an actual definition of bureaucracy – opens the book with a chapter on "Armies, Prisons and Schools" as illustrations of bureaucratic agencies in America.

In his seminal work on bureaucracy, Wilson (1989) classifies agencies into four types on the basis of how easily observable policy outputs (the work agencies do) and outcomes (the impact of that work) are. Organizations with easily observable outputs, but not outcomes are considered *procedural* organizations; those with both highly visible outputs and outcomes are labeled *production* organizations. Organizations where neither are easily observable are *coping* agencies, and those where policy outcomes are readily observed, but outputs are more vague are classified as *craft* organizations. As

bureaucratic organizations, public schools arguably lay somewhere between craft and production organizations (with a greater leaning toward craft organizations) in that what we predominantly observe are outcomes, although some outputs are also observable. Since the primary interest of this project is on examining how political and bureaucratic organizations respond to and influence policy outcomes, schools provide an ideal bureaucracy to study.

With few exceptions,[1] school boards are not the first thing that comes to mind upon the mention of a "political institution." However, many public school districts do indeed constitute independent governments. In an American context, far too often only federal or state governments are instinctively acknowledged as "governments"; yet, as Meier and O'Toole (2006) point out, these governments make up only 51 of the more than 85,000 governments in the United States. Given this reality, more research on these largely ignored governments is warranted.

School districts in Texas are democratically elected legislative bodies and as such are political (Tucker and Zeigler 1978).[2] Lasswell (1936) concisely defined politics as "who gets what, when and how" – a definition that nicely fits with public education. Since a large portion of property taxes are used to fund public education, school boards possess authority to set local property tax rates – an issue that is highly political in every sense of the word. In the 2006-07 school year, total expenditures for Texas public

[1] Kenneth J. Meier is a likely exception to this generalization (see Meier and Stewart 1991; Meier, England and Stewart 1989; Meier and O'Toole 2006).
[2] All but one Texas school district has an elected school board.

school districts topped $43.3 billion, of which over $19 billion (or 48% of total revenue) were procured from local taxes (Texas Education Agency, Financial Reports). Put in perspective, Texas public K-12 educational expenditures in 2007 were higher than the GDPs of 140 countries – or two-thirds of the world's nations - in the same year (The World Factbook). When dealing with these levels of money, politics will inevitably be involved.

Political conflict is an inherent aspect to education policy and managing public schools. The position of school superintendent has been said to be a "position born of conflict" (Knezevich 1975, 373), and whose nature is "living with conflict" (Blumberg 1985). A superintendent's ability to acknowledge and manage political conflict is essential for success within the school district (Hoyle and Skrla 1999). In his book on superintendents and conflict, Arthur Blumberg (1985) quotes a superintendent as saying the following in reference to the political nature of the job:

> It's political, highly political….It's a terribly political job….In graduate school we took a course in the politics of education. What a joke! The whole [expletive] thing is political (p. 53).

This illustrates the political nature of modern public education.

This project proceeds by laying out the theoretical framework for the dissertation, namely, the logic of governance. Chapter III offers the first empirical test of the determinants of political responsiveness, paying particular attention to the role of bureaucratic failure and policy salience. Chapter IV replicates the findings in Chapter III, but incorporates the concept of representation and its role in recognizing bureaucratic

failure and responding to it. The final empirical chapter (Chapter V) moves the analysis to an examination of how bureaucratic factors can moderate the ability of political actors to achieve their goals. This chapter enriches our understanding of the nature of political influence by explicitly incorporating the bureaucracy in the theoretical and empirical analysis – a consideration that is rarely taken in the traditional political control literature.

# CHAPTER II

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Although political control of the bureaucracy is both a normative and empirical concern for politicians, public administrators, and scholars alike, research on political control has advanced in different ways across different disciplines. Political scientists tend to focus on institutional interactions between elected/political institutions and primarily employ formal theoretical models (McCubbins, Noll, Weingast 1989; Moe 1989; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999). Alternatively, public administration scholars focus on the complexities of bureaucratic organizations, but are largely not concerned with the actions and motivations of political institutions and how such actions relate to organizational performance. Unlike public administration scholars, political scientists tend to ignore the role and preferences of the bureaucracy.

This project adopts a broader approach that incorporates both political institutions as well as bureaucratic ones. It examines the motivations of political actors and how these motivations relate to political oversight of bureaucratic performance. While most literature on political control conceptualizes the relationship between political institutions and bureaucratic ones as simply hierarchical, this project views this relationship as dynamic and interactive. Instead of only being concerned with how political actions influence bureaucratic ones, this dissertation is innovative in that it also examines how bureaucratic actions influence political behavior.

The starting point for this project is to adopt a broad framework for examining these interactions. More specifically, this dissertation borrows from the logic of governance, as articulated by Lynn, Heinrich and Hill (2001). However, before this approach is put forward, a brief discussion of the prevailing approach is warranted; namely, principal-agent theory.

**Principal-Agent Theory and Political Control**

Scholars have paid considerable attention to the issue of political control of the bureaucracy employing several approaches and numerous theories attempting to answer the question of how political institutions (legislatures, presidents, courts) control bureaucratic agencies. This question has normative implications rooted in notions of representation and democratic accountability. The classic scholarly debate between Herman Finer (1941) and Carl Friedrich (1940) explicitly dealt with these normative implications. Friedrich advocated for less political control of the bureaucracy, arguing politics is an integral part of implementation and, thus, the only way to achieve good policy is to promote administrative responsibility to both the public and to the scientific profession. Herman Finer, alternatively, argued for direct accountability of administrators to democratic institutions. His contention was that it is not the proper function of administrators to determine what is in the public's interest; rather, this is the duty of elected officials. In democracies, the public should have the "power to exact obedience to orders" (337). Thus, he argued the bureaucracy should be responsive directly to elected institutions and this would be the measure of moral responsibility.

This debate continues today and the normative implications related to bureaucratic discretion are implicit in much of the ongoing political control research.

The principal-agent paradigm (or agency theory) is perhaps the most common framework used by political scientists to study political control of the bureaucracy. This approach has its roots in economic theory and, in one early application was examine to the relationship between drivers and auto insurance companies (Spence & Zeckhauser 1971; see Miller 2005 for a review of principal-agent theory and its applications in political science). The principal-agent model is essentially a theory about contracts between actors (Waterman & Meier 1998), where one actor (the principal) forms a contract with another (the agent) in which the latter engages in some costly action that benefits the former. However, the principal is unable to absolutely enforce the agreement and ensure that the agent will act in the principal's best interest because of an informational asymmetry between the principal and the agent. The principal-agent model also assumes that there is also an divergence in the preferences of the two actors. Since the agent will likely incur costs when performing the action that benefits the principal, the agent will prefer to shirk, but, in order to prevent such shirking, the principal can engage in costly monitoring and/or provide the agent with incentives to offset the agent's costs.[3]

A great deal of the literature on political control has used this general framework, albeit with some modifications made over the years. Under this approach, elected

[3] For a more detail list of the canonical assumptions of agency theory, see Miller (2005).

institutions – most commonly legislatures and/or the president - are the principals and bureaucracies the agents.[4] Agencies are entrusted with carrying out the wishes of their political principals; however, due to informational advantages the bureaucratic agencies have over the political principal, the principal cannot be sure if the agent is acting in its best interest (i.e., moral hazard).[5] To ensure compliance, the principal may employ a combination of monitoring, rewards, and punishments.

For example, Congress may have policy preferences with respect to enforcement of environmental protection laws. However, if the Environmental Protection Agency – the agency entrusted with enforcing these laws – has divergent preferences, it may not enforce the laws in a manner that is consistent with Congressional wishes. It is difficult for Congress, however, to know with certainty whether the EPA is indeed performing its duties. Congress, in turn, has set up a variety of monitoring and reporting requirements in an attempt to ensure the EPA is not shirking. The effectiveness of these mechanisms is, of course, an open question that numerous studies have assessed. Thus, the principal-agent paradigm, then, suggests that a political actor's ability to control the bureaucracy is problematic and it raises interesting questions about how political principals can ensure that bureaucrats will implement policies in accordance with the intent of the elected institution.

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[4] Principal-agent theory has also been applied to the relationship between legislators and their constituents where legislators are the agent.

[5] The information asymmetry assumption presumes that the principal cannot readily observe the actions of the agent, although it can observe outcomes. Thus, unless the principal engages in monitoring, he or she must rely on *outcomes* in determining whether the agent is shirking.

A considerable amount of research suggests that Congress can and does influence, or even control the bureaucracy.[6] This literature has theoretically articulated and empirically tested multiple means Congress uses to achieve this task and has found that, consistent with the principal-agent theory, Congress does offer incentives – both rewards and punishments – to bureaucratic agencies (Weingast and Moran 1983). Weingast (1984) argues that Congress uses incentives such as budgetary appropriations as a means of eliciting desired bureaucratic behavior. The effectiveness of incentives, however, is questionable, and there is evidence suggesting that bureaucracies are not always responsive to political principals (e.g., Wood 1988).

Congress also monitors bureaucratic activities (Waterman and Wood 1993). While, exhaustive monitoring (i.e., gathering complete information on agency behavior) is prohibitively expensive, Bendor, Taylor and Van Gaalen (1985) argue that monitoring itself – regardless of the quality of monitoring – can reduce bureaucratic shirking due to the uncertainty it creates for the bureaucrat.[7] Just as the strategic placement of a vacant police cruiser at the edge of many small towns in rural American results in a sea of brake lights by would-be speeders, so can the possibility of an audit can prevent bureaucratic drift and/or shirking. However, others have argued that Congress does not engage in

[6] The definition of control is often not explicitly defined. The concept of control can rest on the notion of coercive power (e.g., A getting B to do something B would not otherwise do), or simply on controlling outcomes (which may or may not involve coercion) or could simply be a correlation between observable preferences and outcomes.

[7] They argue that monitoring makes it more difficult for the bureaucrat to predict whether he or she will be caught shirking. Since bureaucrats are thought to be risk-adverse, this uncertainty will make them less likely to be deceptive.

adequate oversight of bureaucratic behavior (Bibby 1966, 1968; Ogul 1976; Pearson 1975; Ripley and Franklin 1991; however, see Aberbach 1990).

Alternatively, McCubbins and Schwartz (1984) claim that "police patrol" oversight (e.g., congressional hearings) is not needed, arguing that Congress can employ "fire alarm" oversight in which constituents and interest groups are enabled to monitor bureaucrats (via rules and procedures) and alert agencies, courts or Congress when agents violate congressional goals. This allows Congress to keep bureaus in check, while not having to dedicate valuable time and resources to police patrol oversight. While some empirical evidence has been marshaled in support of this theory (e.g., Lupia and McCubbins 1994), others remain skeptical. Bawn (1994), for example, argues that the credibility of interest-group initiated fire alarms is dubious, thus, undermining the likelihood of congressional action.[8] Additionally, given the amount of attention the average citizen pays to politics and the absence of general political knowledge among the public (see Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996), it seems unlikely that "fire alarms" would serve as an adequate check on bureaucratic behavior. Indeed, Cook and Wood (1989) found the EPA mobilized interest groups in order to manipulate Congress – the opposite of what the fire alarms theory suggests should occur. Yet, even if the public does not routinely sound fire alarms, it is still possible the threat of their use – as with monitoring – may effectively keep bureaucratic agents in check.

[8] Meier, Polinard and Wrinkle (1999) argue the theory is incomplete, and they add the notion of "smoke detectors," which are applicable to bottom-line policy areas.

Congressional sanctions and oversight are examples of *ex post* controls, that is, controls that are reactive to bureaucratic behavior. Scholars have also argued that *ex ante* controls can be used and are perhaps more effective and efficient. McCubbins, Noll and Weingast (1987, 1989) argue that the most effective forms of control are *ex ante* controls in the form of administrative procedures and rules. They argue that administrative procedures can increase bureaucratic accountability by allowing constituency participation, thus incorporating legislative preferences into policies. Additionally, legislators can protect the interests of favored constituents via administrative procedures, effectively "stacking the deck" in favor of certain interests over time. They also argue that the structural arrangements of the agency will result in a political environment that "mirrors" the politics at the time of enactment. This environment will be biased toward the interests of favored groups, and will exhibit a lasting "autopilot" characteristic in that the agency will change as the preferences of the favored group change. Similarly, Moe (1989) claims that the conflictual nature of politics will lead to the creation of agencies with structures that lend to inefficiency. Knowing they will not be in power forever, political winning coalitions attempt to "hardwire" their preferences into the agency's structure and insulate it from politics so that future coalitions cannot reverse their decisions. A prominent example – albeit a political one - of attempts at hardwiring preferences is the political infighting that occurs over the selection of Supreme Court Justices.

Mashaw (1990), however, argues that since administrative procedures include the participation of interest groups from both winning and losing coalitions, administrative

procedures are unlikely to favor either group.[9] Indeed, empirical evidence of so-called "deck-stacking" has been mixed. Balla (1998), for example, finds little evidence of deck-stacking in heath care financing, and drinking water policy (Balla and Wright 2001) during the rule-making process. However, Whitford (2002) found that the level of agency centralization (i.e., structure) significantly influences bureaucratic responsiveness.

The role of structure and process is also undermined by the apparent influence political actors have on bureaucratic performance. If structure and procedures lock in preferences, we should not expect to see bureaucratic outputs significantly shift as partisan control of congress changes. However, Scholz and Wood (1998) find that IRS audits are responsive to partisan changes in both Congress and the presidency. Likewise, Wood and Waterman (1993, 1994) find that congressional hearings (as well as presidential statements and court rulings) can significantly influence bureaucratic behavior. That said, bureaucratic structure is certainly not unimportant; rather, it may not be influential in the manner depicted by McCubbins, Noll and Weingast (1987, 1989), i.e., deck-stacking and hardwiring. Likewise, Hammond and Knott (1996) argue that the level of agency autonomy affects the form of control it faces. Structure, then, appears to act as a buffer from political control, but does not necessarily negate it.

While agency theory has been valuable in providing insights to interactions between political and administrative institutions, critics contend that it is often overly

[9] Also see Horn & Shepsle (1989) and Arnold (1987) for criticisms of McNollgast's claims.

simplistic and largely ignores the bureaucracy itself. Indeed, principal-agent models of political control are almost exclusive top-down models in political science research. The focus is largely, if not entirely, on the preferences of the political principals rather than the bureaucrats. Being that agency theory often assumes there is goal conflict between principals and agents, it is peculiar that the bureaucrats' preferences are rarely dealt with in these models (Meier and O'Toole 2006). Alternatively, treatments of political control by public administration scholars tend to be much more in depth concerning characteristics of the bureaucracy and prefer a bottom-up rather than a top-down approach (e.g. West 1995, Furlong 1998).

This project adopts a different approach in examining political influence of public policy performance. Recognizing that the policy process is complex, involving multiple actors, stages, and levels, this project begins with a broad governance framework. Governance is a broad term that incorporates all that goes into the production of public goods and services; it includes structures, preferences, and institutions - public and private, political and bureaucratic.

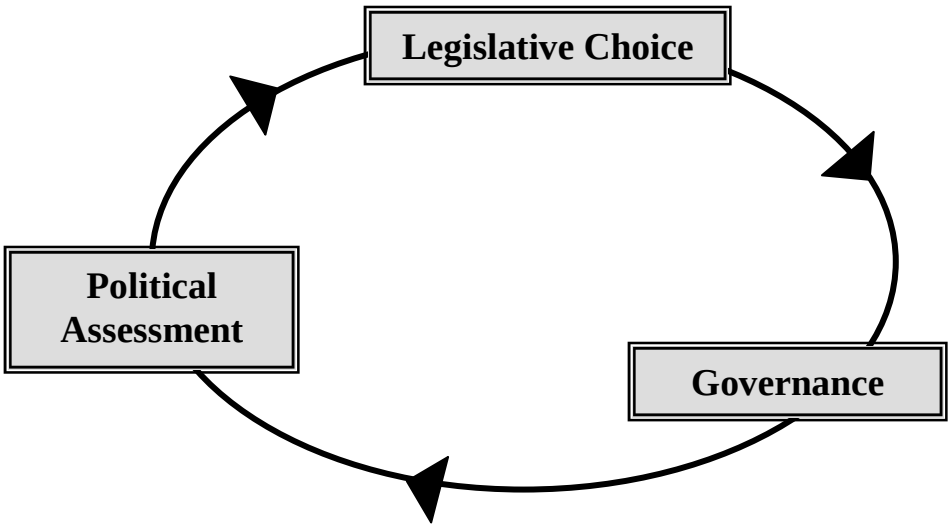
**A Governance Framework**

In their book, *Improving Governance*, Lynn, Heinrich and Hill present a theoretical framework of governance. Governance, as the authors put it, refers to "the means for achieving direction, control, and coordination of wholly or partially autonomous individuals or organizational units on behalf of interests to which they jointly contribute" (Lynn, Heinrich and Hill 2001, pg. 6). Governance, then, entails

systematic interactions between institutional entities, while also encompassing the larger environment in which institutions exercise their authority in achieving their goals. Governance includes the "regimes of laws, rules, judicial decisions, and administrative practices that constrain, prescribe and enable the provision of public supported goods and services" (Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill, 2001 pg. 7).

The logic of governance outlined by Lynn, Heinrich and Hill incorporates all the factors that play a role in the production of public policy goods and services. In its simplest form, the logic of governance places these factors into three broad categories: Legislative Choice, Governance, and Political Assessment. Figure 2.1 displays this simplified model of governance.

**Figure 2.1**
**A Simplified Logic of Governance**



As the diagram implies, governance is an ongoing cyclical process involving multiple stages. Legislative preferences and choices are the product of legislative coalitions that develop in response to the interests of citizens and stakeholders. Legislative coalitions are often vital in the design of agencies. As mentioned above, a considerable amount of theoretical and empirical research has examined legislative "deck-stacking" – a legislative coalition's attempt to create structures, procedures, or rules that favor a particular group above others (McCubbins, Noll and Weingast 1987, 1989; Bawn 1995; Balla 1998; Balla and Wright 2001). Such "deck-stacking" may have real world implications on agency management and outputs.

Lynn, Heinrich and Hill argue that these legislative choices influence the implementation of policy. This occurs at multiple levels of the implementation process – from administrative executives to middle managers to street-level bureaucrats – via both *ex ante* and *ex post* controls, which are attempts to either preempt or respond to bureaucratic behavior that departs from legislative preferences (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). This broad category labeled governance also includes the core tasks agencies perform as well as the results and outputs that results from such work. The process does not end once outputs are realized, however. Rather, political actors, citizens and stakeholders assess the performance of administrative agencies, and this process then informs future legislative decisions.

While governance is cyclical, it is decidedly hierarchical. Figure 2.2 presents a more complex model of governance. Legislatures form their policy preferences and

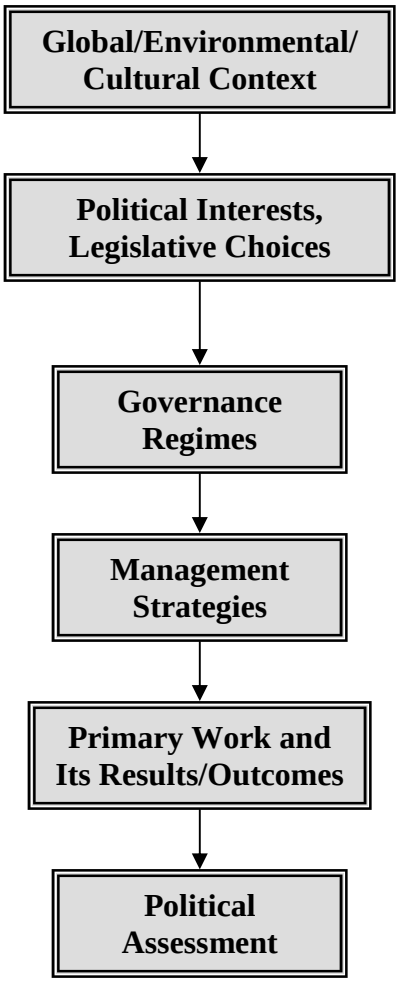
choices based, in part, on the political preferences and interests in the global environment often expressed by the public. Legislative preferences shape the laws that create the structures, processes and regimes that guide public agencies. The administration and management of these agencies – both of which are directly affected by the formal structure and processes created by legislation – influence the core technologies, "primary work," and outcomes of the organizations. Arguably, this could be broken down into at least two distinct stages or levels, namely, primary work and outputs/outcomes. Finally, the outcomes are subject to political assessment, which, in turn, informs the decisions of political actors in their future decisions.

While the logic of governance as articulated by Lynn, Heinrich and Hill is not a theory, it is a framework designed to serve as a heuristic by organizing and simplifying the complexity of the public sector. It incorporates environmental, political, institutional, managerial and technical levels of governance and provides a framework for thinking about politics and public administration in a systematic manner.

This project proceeds by asking two broad questions with respect to this framework. The first inquires to what extent political assessment occurs. That is, do political institutions or actors systematically assess policy outputs and outcomes? Do they systematically respond when outcomes deviate from the stated goals of the political institution? Furthermore, does a response from elected officials result in changes in administrative behavior? Research on political control typically views the relationship between political actors, public administrators and policy outcomes as hierarchical and

often unidirectional. This project, however, approaches these relationships in a more complex and interactive way. It is interested in how managerial actions, policy outputs and policy outcomes result in changing political actions.

**Figure 2.2**
**A Complex Model of Governance**




The second broad question of interest to this research seeks to understand what conditions – environmental, political, managerial, or organizational – facilitate or

constrain political influence over policy outcomes. Are there organizational or managerial traits or conditions that allow elected officials to be more influential in shaping policy outcomes? What role does management play in limiting or facilitating political influence? As mentioned above, this approach does not simply examine the relationship between political actors and policy outcomes as a strictly hierarchical, unidirectional process. Rather, it is interested in the dynamics between managers and elected policy-makers and the circumstances under which we are most likely to see congruence between political preferences and policy outcomes.

**Performance Failure and Political Responsiveness**

The first empirical chapter (Chapter III) of this dissertation examines political responsiveness to bureaucratic failure. There are numerous examples of political actors responding to instances of bureaucratic failure. Elected officials met the Space Shuttle Challenger and Columbia disasters with intense scrutiny. The latter case resulted in the suspension of all NASA space shuttle launches for nearly 30 months, while the Challenger disaster resulted in a 32-month hiatus in space shuttle launches. Internal and external investigations ensued including a Presidential commission (Rogers Commission), Congressional hearings, as well as independent investigations (Columbia Accident Investigation Board).

The question this investigation is interested in, however, is whether political responsiveness *systematically* occurs. Or, does it only occur in instances of massive failure? That is, do political actors engage in political assessment of policies and, more

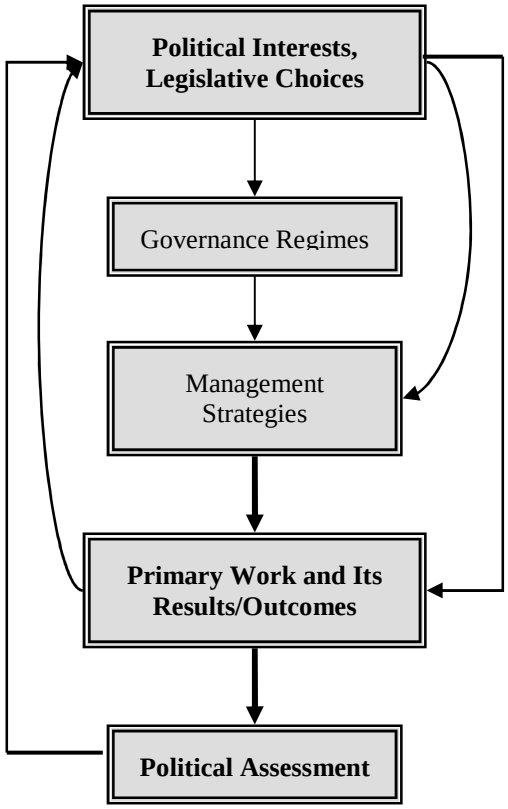
importantly, do they respond when policies are not satisfactory, but not necessarily disastrous. Much of the political control literature focuses on the question of whether political actions change bureaucratic performance. Chapter III, alternatively, inquires whether bureaucratic performance changes *political* behavior.

With respect to the governance framework, Chapter III is interested in the final level/stage of governance (see Figure 2.3). Do the results and outcomes produced by bureaucratic agencies result in changes in the behavior and choices of elected institutions? Political assessment, arguably, is an ongoing and ubiquitous process. Indeed, political institutions frequently set up accountability systems designed to monitor agency efficiency, effectiveness and equity. The federal government has created several such systems including the current Program Assessment Rating Tool (PART), which evaluates the performance of federal programs. State and local agencies also establish such systems for policy evaluation. The question Chapter III is concerned with, however, is do political actors and institutions respond to these assessment systems. The creation of an assessment system in and of itself is not evidence that political assessment is occurring. Good governance presumes that *political behavior and choices* respond to policy assessment – either positively or negatively.

There are a number of reasons we would expect political institutions to be responsive to policy failure. Indeed, research on Congress points to a number of incentives that should lead to political oversight, with the dominant two being concerned with reelection (e.g. Mayhew 1974) and public policy preferences (e.g. Mayhew 1974,

Fenno 1973, 1978). Chapter III examines these political incentives and how they relate to political responsiveness to bureaucratic performance.

**Figure 2.3**
**Chapter III: Performance and Political Assessment**




Chapter III also examines what effect political action has on future bureaucratic performance. In theory, political responsiveness will result in changes in managerial and organizational behavior, producing (hopefully) improvements in future performance. Political action could involve changes in agency heads, budgets, structures, processes or goals. Such changes are to result in improvements in areas where past deficiencies

existed. The arrows on the right-hand portion of Figure 2.3 depict this process. This chapter examines whether political actions do indeed produce changes in managerial strategies and, ultimately, future agency performance.

Although the question of whether political assessment occurs is a core issue in ensuring proper governance, it has not been thoroughly examined in the political science, public policy or public administration literatures. Political institutions, as representatives of the public, are intended to ensure that public policy outcomes are in the public's best interest. This presumes that political assessment is occurring at some level. Chapter III seeks to examine whether this is indeed the case.

**Political Representation and Political Responsiveness**

Theoretically, we expect political institutions to be responsive presumably because they have political incentives to do so. Such incentives, either electoral or policy related, are the primary catalyst for political responsiveness to agency failure. However, does political responsiveness occur when political incentives to respond are absent? When policy failures are not salient or do not affect the majority of citizens, does political responsiveness dissipate?

Chapter IV addresses this question by focusing on policy outcomes important to Latinos, a group whose political interests are often underrepresented in electoral institutions. Chapter IV replicates the analysis of Chapter III except it examines outputs and outcomes specific to Latinos. The theoretical considerations developed in Chapter

IV posit that political responsiveness is unlikely to occur unless the interests of Latinos are represented in the elected body. If representation is present, however, political intervention would be more likely to occur. Furthermore, policy outputs are likely to change as a consequence of such intervention.

Both Chapter III and IV, then, attempt to assess whether political assessment occurs, as suggested by the governance framework. The idea of political assessment is integral to much of the public policy literature. Students are taught that political assessment occurs and the "feedback loop" depicted in Figure 2.3 is part of the policy-making process. But is this really the case? Indeed, there are numerous oversight institutions and accountability systems in both federal and local government. The process of political assessment, however, entails more than monitoring and collecting performance data. Rather, political assessment presumes that the behavior and choices of elected representatives act in response to these assessment tools. If they do not, then political assessment, as presented in public policy theory, is not really occurring.

**Political Influence and Public Managers**

In their highly acclaimed book *Bureaucratic Dynamics*, Dan Wood and Richard Waterman (1994) examine political influence over a number of federal agencies. They measure the extent of political influence as the magnitude of the relationship between political preferences and policy outputs. Using time series analysis, they examined whether political actions (political appointees, budget cuts, etc.) resulted in changes in policy outputs. They inferred the extent to which political actions did result in changes in

outputs represented political influence on bureaucratic agencies. They concluded that political institutions can and do exert control over the bureaucracy. Their evidence was so compelling they summarized the work by writing:

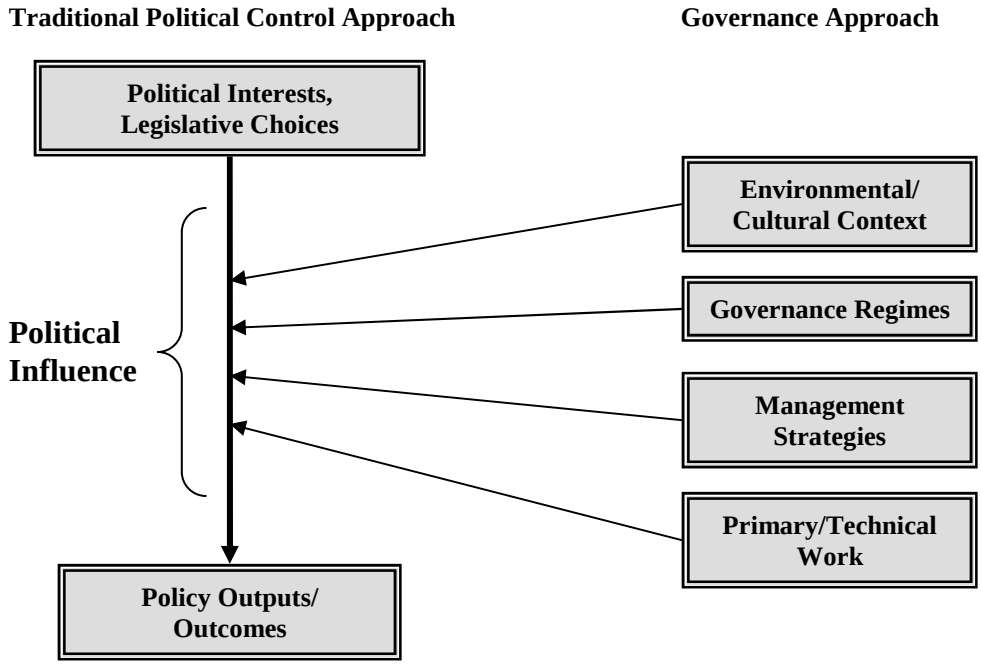
> We believe this evidence for active political control is so strong that controversy should now end over *whether* political control occurs . . . . Future research should turn toward exploring the *determinants* of political control. (Wood and Waterman 1991: 822)

Sixteen years have passed and this scholarly challenge has largely gone unaddressed. Engaging this challenge would entail an examination of environmental, bureaucratic, structural, and managerial conditions that may enhance or impede political influence. That is, it conceptually corresponds with the logic of governance framework where one could account for multiple levels of governance rather than solely the link between political action and policy outputs and outcomes. More specifically, it requires that we examine how the relationship between political actions and policy outcomes is conditional on other factors, such as structure and management.

One of the difficulties in exploring the determinants of political influence in this manner *empirically* is that it requires a dataset that has considerable variation across environmental, organizational, and managerial characteristics. The data Wood and Waterman utilize, while providing temporal variation, is comprised of only a handful of agencies, thus limiting the degree to variation across bureaucratic units. Fortunately, the data employed in this analysis includes over 1000 different bureaucratic units, providing substantial variation across agencies.

In keeping with the governance framework, the final empirical chapter (Chapter V) addresses Wood and Waterman's challenge from a governance approach. Rather than simply examining the direct relationship between political preferences and policy outcomes as much of the traditional political control literature does, this analysis examines how other levels of governance condition this relationship. While traditional

**Figure 2.4**
**Chapter V. Determinants of Political Influence**




political control literature has only examined the direct effect of political preferences on policy outcomes (as depicted on the left-hand side of Figure 2.4), this project examines how the other levels of governance are important in determining the extent and nature of political influence on policy outcomes. This is something the traditionally political

control literature does not address, but needs to in order to engage Wood and Waterman's challenge appropriately.

**Conclusion**

The aim of this project is to enhance our understanding of the complex relationship between political actors, public managers and policy outcomes. Since the most prolific paradigm to studying political influence of policy outcomes (i.e. principal-agent theory) largely ignores the many other levels of the policy process, a new approach is warranted. My hope is that by using a broader, more inclusive framework – namely, the logic of governance – our knowledge of the complexities of these relationships will improve.

This project also contributes to the literature in other important ways. A critical part of governance is political assessment, where political institutions are thought to respond to the results and outcomes bureaucratic agencies produce –a process that allows politicians to update their information regarding the real-world effects of their policy-making decisions. Arguably, political assessment is as important as any of the other levels of governance. With a simple but fundamental test, chapter III empirically examines whether political responsiveness does indeed occur. Chapter IV further extends this analysis to include political responsiveness to historically underrepresented groups – namely Latinos.

By taking up Wood and Waterman's challenge, this project is also one of the first to examine not only *whether* political institutions can be influential in shaping public policy outcomes, but *under what conditions* their influence is facilitated or constrained. Using a large n dataset with numerous distinct bureaucratic organizations provides considerable variation on environmental organizational and managerial characteristics, which gives us the leverage needed to test for the determinants of political influence. This is a feet that has been met with little success thus far due to the high data requirement needed for such analysis.

This dissertation is also notable for at least two additional reasons. First, it focuses on local levels of government, rather than the federal government as the vast majority of political influence research does. While the federal government is certainly worthy of attention, local governments are far more ubiquitous and more directly affect the lives of citizens. Therefore, having a more complete understanding of local levels of government will contribute to more effective, efficient, and equitable governance. Finally, this work deals with education policy, which is an important and highly salient substantive policy area. Indeed, virtually all Americans are directly exposed in one way or another to our educational system, so to the extent that we can better understand education policy we can improve the lives of citizens in a meaningful way.

# CHAPTER III

## PERFORMANCE FAILURE AND POLITICAL RESPONSIVENESS

In January of 2008, the Cincinnati Public School District fired the principal and all teachers at Taft Elementary School due to poor performance on standardized tests. The pass rates on state mandated exams at Taft Elementary were, on average, 20 points below the school district average, and the school failed to meet test standards for nine consecutive years. This prolonged failure prompted the en masse firings. In February 2008, Dallas Independent School District fired 25 teachers in two elementary and five high schools because of poor performance on test scores. Additionally, there are numerous instances of superintendents being fired or bought out of their contracts due to poor performance. In 1999, the student pass rate on the state exam at San Antonio ISD – one of the state's largest school districts – was 17 points below the state average. An unhappy school board voted in favor of buying out the superintendent's contract at a cost of $800,000. This move violated state law, which does not allow buyouts for more than the value of one-year's salary and benefits. This resulted in SAISD loosing a portion of their state funds as a penalty for the buyout. Indeed, between July 2005 and July 2007 alone, 12 Texas public school districts spent over $2.4 million on superintendent buyouts (see Ray and Marshall 2006; Hoyle and Skrla 1999).

Similar to these school districts, there are also numerous examples of intense political responses to poor bureaucratic performance in the federal government. In the wake of Hurricane Katrina, for example, the public was inundated with horror stories of

the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) inadequate response to the devastation left behind. Members of Congress lashed out on FEMA's debacle and, in particular, FEMA chief Michael Brown, resulting in his resignation. Elected officials promptly called for an investigation and suddenly federal emergency disaster response was one of the nation's top priorities. In 2007, administrators at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center found themselves in a scandal surrounding the lack of quality care Iraq War veterans had received. The resulting political scrutiny included congressional hearings, a visit by President Bush and several independent investigations and led to the resignations of a number of high-ranking military officials, including generals and the Secretary of the Army.

These anecdotes suggest that elected officials do respond to poor bureaucratic performance. However, do these political responses only occur when the failure is so substantial that ignoring it would be political suicide? Indeed, in many of these cases, political interest intensified only after the media called attention to the failure. The first question this chapter examines is whether elected institutions respond to poor bureaucratic performance in a *systematic* fashion. Is the likelihood of political intervention contingent on bureaucratic performance, where lower levels of past performance are associated with higher levels of intervention? The second question this chapter examines is whether such intervention results in a change in managerial behavior. Finally, does increased political involvement lead to improved future performance?

**Bureaucratic Failure**

Of prime interest to this research is the notion of bureaucratic failure. Much of the literature on bureaucratic failure seeks to understand the causes of failure. Studies have examined the role of factors such as bureaucratic capacity and leadership in influencing bureaucratic performance, in addition to a host of other factors (organization structure, goal clarity/conflict; see Pierce 1981). For the purposes of this analysis, however, the cause of bureaucratic failure is unimportant. Rather, this project is interested in the role political institutions play in responding to such failure.

Bureaucratic failure, for the purposes of this project, is when a bureaucratic agency's performance on some measure is significantly below typical levels. This definition acknowledges that the agency may be performing well on other dimensions. That is, this definition does not mean that the agency has failed on many or all dimensions and is facing closure (e.g. as in the case of market failure). Indeed, it may be that administrators are unaware of the failure, as will be discussed in Chapter IV.

This definition of failure is also distinct from political failure. Bovens et al. (1999) distinguish *program* failure from *political* failure using the following definitions:

> [A] *program* failure pertains to the technocratic dimension of policy-making and organizational behavior. It occurs when a policy decision, plan, or strategy fails to have the desired impact on target populations or even produces major unintended and unwanted effects. A *political* failure, in contrast, does not involve the social consequences of policies but, rather, the way in which policies are perceived in the court of public opinion and the political arena (Bovens et al. 1999, 123).

These two failures may or may not coincide. It is possible, for example, for a program to perform well in terms of its stated goals, yet that program could still be considered a *political* failure. Alternatively, a program could be costly, inefficient and ineffective, yet it may not be considered a failure by political actors. This project is interested with the performance of agencies in terms of the outputs and outcomes produced and the extent to which these outputs and outcomes are consistent with the goals of the program or organization; that is, program performance and failure. The question is, do political actors respond to such performance, or do they only respond to political failures and policy fiascos? While there are reasons to suspect the latter is more often the case than the former, elected officials and institutions do have incentives to respond. A brief discussion of these incentives is warranted.

**Incentives for Political Responsiveness**

Some argue the primary goal of elected officials is reelection (Mayhew 1974); hence, politicians have an electoral incentive to ensure bureaucratic agencies are implementing policies that comport with electoral interests. This occurs because the public may hold legislators responsible for policy outcomes even when the elected officials are not directly at fault. For example, presidential approval ratings – and thus electoral support – are often influenced by economic factors, even though the president may have little to do with the state of the economy (see Wood 2004)**.** Thus, bureaucratic outputs often have electoral consequences for elected officials (see Arnold 1979). Indeed, negative policy outputs are often brought to light by political challengers as a

means to garner electoral support during election campaigns (Mayhew 1974, Fenno 1977). Politicians, as well as political opponents, are continually searching for political ammunition, that is, issues that can be turned into electoral support. Thus, elected officials are often conscious of bureaucratic performance particularly concerning issues that constituents deem important.

Political actors often focus on bureaucratic performance (both good and bad) as a political tool. Politicians often point to bureaucratic success to credit-claim in order to gain electoral support (Mayhew 1974). Conversely, when bureaucratic performance falters, elected officials are likely shift the blame to administrators (Calvert, McCubbins and Weingast 1989; Fiorina 1986; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999). This allows politicians to make political promises of change to constituents and potentially increase electoral support. However, the blame-shifting strategy may have limited utility since prolonged failure is likely to have electoral consequences. That is, if politicians do not follow up on their promises and the bureaucracy continues to produce lackluster results, the electorate may respond by electing new officials. For this reason, it is in elected representatives' interests to ensure positive bureaucratic outputs, at least in areas that are highly salient to the constituents.

Policymakers can themselves construct political fiascoes. Drawing attention to policy failures or even events that are out of bureaucrats' control (e.g. flooding) can be in the interest of some politicians. Indeed, the construction of many policy fiascoes is a "highly complex and intensely political process" (Bovens, et al. 1999, 126). In their

study of a police fiasco in the Netherlands, Bovens, et al. (1999) found numerous blame avoidance strategies were used to deal with the failure, including blame-shifting, and initiating investigations to minimize political damage. This research suggests that political actors do have incentives to pay attention to bureaucratic performance and, when possible, even shape the public's perceptions of the failure in order to avoid blame or take credit for success.

This implies that the interactions between political and bureaucratic actors, both in terms of content and frequency, may be contingent, in part, on bureaucratic performance. That is, in situations where the bureaucracy has failed to produce positive outputs regarding policy areas that are salient to the public, perceptive elected officials may pressure public administrators to address policy programs or areas that need improvement before program failure translates into political failure. Alternatively, in circumstances where the bureaucracy is performing well, political institutions may adopt a hands-off strategy as not to interfere with bureaucratic success, while still claiming the credit for that success. This is what we would expect from the logic of governance. Theoretically, at least, elected officials engage in political assessment and monitor bureaucratic performance and intervene when outputs are not consistent with legislative goals and objectives. That is, political behavior and actions adjust in response to bureaucratic outputs and policy outcomes.

This process entails that elected representatives first identify a problem with bureaucratic performance. There are a number of ways in which politicians can become

informed of bureaucratic failure. Constituents often directly contact their representatives to voice their dissatisfaction with bureaucratic performance (i.e. fire alarms). Likewise, interest groups continually keep lawmakers informed of a wide range of policy issues including inadequate bureaucratic outputs. Elected officials, however, are likely to take notice of issues that are important to their own constituents. That is, a politician is more likely to push for policy changes that will benefit her primary supporters (e.g., businesses, environmental groups, etc.) than she would for issues that do not affect her constituents. Legislators, therefore, will carefully choose which issues to advance since they have limited resources dedicated to multiple goals (Fenno 1977). The primary criterion for advancing a policy objective is the level of salience the issue holds to the representative's primary constituency. Gormley (1986, 1989) has argued that policy salience is an important predictor as to who participates in policy-making decisions. Additionally, Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner (2003) find that salience is important in determining the propensity for elected officials to attempt to influence bureaucratic behavior.

**Systematic versus Selective Responsiveness**

While there appear to be numerous incentives for political actors to engage in systematic political assessment, much of the empirical literature suggests this is not the case; rather, political elites respond only to *political* failure, which may or may not be due to actual program failure. Indeed, few program failures are ever labeled policy failures/fiascoes by political elites, and many such failures remain unseen by all except a

handful of those who are directly involved (Bovens et al. 1999). This suggests that political salience and visibility of the failure may be far more important than the magnitude and existence of the actual failure.

In an article on public maladministration, Gerald Caiden (1991) lists 175 "bureaupathologies" ranging from abuse of power to discrimination to tokenism to red tape (492). These bureaupathologies often result in organizational inefficiency, an inability to adjust to environmental changes and gradual atrophy. Caiden contends that that maladministration and bureaupathologies often continue undetected until something goes horribly wrong and massive failure occurs. It is only then that officials finally address the problems that led to the failure. There are numerous anecdotes that confirm this general pattern. The Space Shuttle Program failed to launch space shuttles on numerous occasions due to technical problems; arguably, this is an indication that something was wrong. However, these instances of failure were widely ignored. It was only after devastating catastrophes occurred that political elites took a serious look at the program's performance and management. Similarly, Dunsire and Hood (1989) find that little is done to prevent the occurrence or reoccurrence of bureaupathologies.

Unfortunately, there is very little research on bureaucratic failure, and especially political responses to failure. Most of the literature on bureaucratic failure, or maladministration deals with either categorizing types of failure, or is interested in the causes of failure. Pierce (1981), for example, developed 75 hypotheses predicting the causes of bureaucratic failure. Little research, however, has examined political

responses to bureaucratic failure. Hence, little is know about whether elected officials systematically respond to poor bureaucratic performance – as we would expect theoretically – or only respond to instances of massive failure as much of the empirical evidence seems to suggest. The current literature on this topic, then, presents contradictory expectations.

Based on this logic, we can generate testable hypotheses concerning the interaction between an elected institution and an administrative one. If political elites systematically engage in political assessment and respond to bureaucratic performance, we should expect the level of interaction between elected officials and public managers to increase as bureaucratic performance declines. As argued above, this may result because elected officials fear that bureaucratic failure could aid electoral challengers and perhaps lead to a loss of votes in the next election. Alternatively, political elites ostensibly would rather not deal with the embarrassment and public scrutiny involved with a policy fiasco, especially if the public holds them responsible. In an attempt to prevent bureaucratic failure from being used against them politically, assiduous politicians will pressure public administrators to focus their energy on ameliorating the particular areas of bureaucratic performance that have been found wanting. Such pressure necessitates increased contact, if not coordination, between administrators and elected officials. The alternative hypothesis is that argued by Caiden (1991), Bovens, et al. (1999) and others, where political actors tend to respond only after massive failure

has occurred and program failure has become political failure.[10] Using a simple but fundamental test, this chapter examines whether political intervention – as expressed via political-administrative interactions – is influenced by bureaucratic performance.

**Policy Salience**

As noted above, past research has found that policy salience is an important factor in predicting political behavior (Gormley 1986, 1989; Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner 2003; Bawn 1997). Calvert, McCubbins and Weingast (1989) argue that in policy areas deemed more important, politicians will limit agency discretion in an attempt to lower uncertainty. Others also argue that political institutions will more ardently attempt to influence bureaucratic behavior directly in policy areas that are highly salient, particularly when public preferences are uniform (Spence 1997; Bawn 1997; Epstein and O'Halloran 1994). Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner (2003), using Congressional data from 1949 to 1996, find that the propensity for Congress to use legislation aimed at changing bureaucratic behavior is higher for salient policy areas than non-salient policy areas. With respect to responding to bureaucratic failure, the incentives and rewards for political elites to act are arguably higher for highly salient and visible policy areas than for less salient policies. Furthermore, the political consequences for not acting (e.g. blame for failure) are both more severe and more likely

[10] This may be the more rational action, since most program failure goes by generally unnoticed by the public and media, it makes sense that political actors will only respond after it becomes a "problem" for the public.

if the failure occurs within a visible and salient policy area compared to failure within relatively known/unseen policy area.

The current literature on political responsiveness to bureaucratic failure – though sparse – is essentially divided between research that suggests political actors should respond to bureaucratic failure (i.e. political incentives to respond exist) and research that argues political responsiveness is absent except for the most egregious instances of failure. It could be, however, that policy salience is a key factor in determining whether political actors respond. That is, political actors will be more likely to respond to bureaucratic failure if that failure occurs in a policy area or output that is salient to the public. This suggests that political incentives to respond to failure are directly – and not surprisingly – linked to the level of salience of the policy output.

It should be noted that the policy salience is not a clear-cut concept. Indeed, a policy output or outcome may be salient to one group but not another, or one agency but not another. We should expect, however, that political responsiveness will be most likely when the majority of the clientele or stakeholders deem the policy output in question is salient. Failures in policy outputs/outcomes that are salient to particular groups or sub-clienteles are less likely to elicit a political response than failure in policy outputs/outcomes that are considered salient by the majority of the public.[11]

[11] One potentially important aspect of salience is the role of the media. Indeed, the media can make a policy issues highly salient overnight. While this project does not directly consider the effects of the media's role in policy salient, it does recognize the potential for its importance.

**Effectiveness of Political Intervention**

In addition to examining whether political elites respond to bureaucratic failure in a systematic manner, the second question this chapter examines is whether such intervention results in a change in managerial behavior and, ultimately, improved future performance?

How might this work? Political pressure from elected officials (some of whom have the ability to fire administrators and political appointees) lead these administrators to refocus their time and energy on issues and areas that need improvement. In the case of the Challenger and Columbia disasters, pressure from political principals led NASA administrators to focus more of their attention on safety issues. Similarly, in the late 1950's and 60's, NASA's failure to launch the first satellite into space, undoubtedly resulted in increased efforts and resources toward reaching the moon. In the recent case of maladministration at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, political pressure has resulted in increased administrative efforts to improve the medical care of soldiers returning from Iraq. Thus, we would expect political pressure to result in changes in managerial activities and priorities whereby they will refocus their attention to remedy the program failure.

Looking at this from an administrative perspective, there are several reasons and incentives why administrators and public managers would be likely to respond to such political pressures. The first is fear. This could include fear of losing their position, loss of discretion, or budget cuts. In the case of FEMA director, Michael Brown, despite

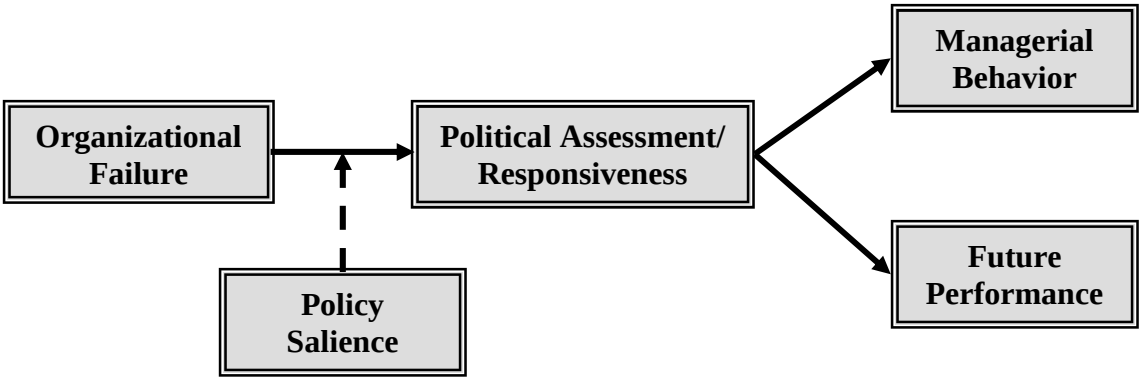
President Bush's early compliments (i.e., "You're doing a heck of a job, Brownie"), it did not take long for him to lose his position following FEMA's mishandling of the Hurricane Katrina response. Similarly, several high-ranking military officials were relieved of duty following the policy fiasco at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

A second reason is professionalism. Arguably, most public managers consider themselves professionals, and many hold advanced degrees. Undoubtedly, most public managers do care about their organization's performance. Many belong to professional organizations and are cognizant of the norms within their profession and associations. This is akin to Carl Friedrich's (1940) argument about relying on professionalism and the scientific community to ensure bureaucratic accountability. Finally, the extent to which managers build good reputations with respect to their organization's performance can lead to upward movement in terms of career opportunities. This could provide a manager with access to more desirable and satisfying positions either within his or her own organization or within other organizations.

Therefore, this chapter is interested in the *effects* of political intervention in the face of bureaucratic failure. That is, when bureaucratic outputs are unsatisfactory, does political intervention lead to improved performance? As mentioned above, we would expect public managers to redirect their energies and resources to ameliorate the problem when faced with mounting pressures from their political principals. Whether they are successful will depend on a variety of factors, such as manager quality and capacity, as well as resources and environmental constraints. Empirically, however, we

should expect managerial behavior to change as a result of political pressure and, in turn, performance should also change. This has two testable implications, as indicated by Figure 3.1. First, increased contact between political actors and public managers should result in improved future performance, and, secondly, this relationship should be strongest in cases where past bureaucratic performance has faltered.

**Figure 3.1**
**Past Failure and Political Assessment**




As Figure 3.1 implies, bureaucratic failure should result in a political response, provided that the policy output is salient to the public. If the policy area is salient, we should expect political actors to monitor performance closely and respond to failure. Alternatively, if the policy area is not salient, political actors are less likely to notice the failure has occurred and, thus, less likely to respond. Under this scenario, we would expect bureaucratic failure to go by unnoticed indefinitely or until massive failure occurs (i.e. the Caiden hypothesis), prompting a drastic increase in public attention to the failure, thus increasing salience and eliciting a political response.

Furthermore, political intervention, when it occurs as a response to failure, is expected to result in changes in managerial behavior that results in improvements in performance. Public managers are expected to redirect their time and resources in an attempt to improve outputs and outcomes related to performance. Thus, if an agency is performing poorly on their core function, increased political pressure should result in increased managerial focus on core tasks and a decrease in secondary activities. This refocusing ought to result in improvements in the performance of the agency's core function. From this, we can derive at least three testable hypotheses:

$H_1$: *Bureaucratic failure will lead to increased political oversight/political intervention.*

$H_2$: *Political intervention will lead to a change in managerial focus and behavior.*

$H_3$: *Political intervention, as a response to past failure, will lead to improvements in future bureaucratic performance.*

**An Empirical Test**

This chapter proceeds by testing the arguments articulated above in a series of steps. First, it examines the relationship between past performance and political responsiveness. The expectation is that, if the policy output is salient, political responsiveness will occur. If it is not salient, or is conditionally salient, then we do not expect a political response. Second, increased contact should change managerial behavior where managers are expected to reallocate their time and resources to focus on core tasks to improve their performance. Thus, we expect political action to result in a

change in managerial behavior. Finally, this paper will examine the effects of contact on future performance. Increased contact should result in improved future performance, particularly in districts that performed poorly in the past.

While this theoretical framework is applicable to a host of bureaucracies and political institutions, the ideal bureaucratic-political relationship used to test this theory should hold certain characteristics. First, the bureaucracy should have identifiable performance indicators. Indeed, Wood and Waterman (1994) argued that the key to political influence of policy outputs was the presence and use of measurable performance indicators. Second, bureaucratic outputs should be salient to the public in order for political actors to respond. Thus, we need agencies with different measures of policy outputs that vary in levels of salience to the public. Additionally, the political institution should ideally have a generally focused objective that directly relates to the bureaucracy. If the political institution had numerous bureaucracies under its jurisdiction, it would be increasingly difficult for the political institution to identify bureaucratic failure within any particular agency, particularly if the failure pertained to only certain constituencies. Additionally, the more levels of hierarchy involved, the further removed direct political influence will be on actual bureaucratic outputs. This is particularly true in cases where the majority of members within the political institution does not recognize the failure and/or does not have political incentives to act.

School districts are one such political-bureaucratic arrangement that does meet these criteria. Schools do indeed generate identifiable outputs that range considerably on

their level of importance to the public, and the relationship between administrators and elected officials (school board members) is direct. School districts have independently elected representative bodies, namely school boards. A school board's primary bureaucratic contact is with school district administration, primarily the district's superintendent. Thus, political actors are more likely to be aware of failure and more capable to intervene directly, making school districts an ideal political-bureaucratic system in which to test the theory developed above.

## Data and Methods

This chapter employs multi-year data collected on Texas public school districts to test the hypotheses posited above. There are over 1000 Texas public school districts, offering a great deal of variation on a variety of organizational, demographic and performance-based characteristics. Texas school districts are required to report a wide range of data to the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the state's primary oversight agency. These data are available to the public and form the basis of the performance and control variables for this study.

### *Bureaucratic Performance/Failure*

School districts can be assessed on a variety of performance measures including standardized tests, dropouts, college readiness, SAT scores and graduation rates. The key performance measure used in this project is arguably the most salient. The state of Texas requires all public school districts to annually administer the Texas Assessment of

Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) exam to students at multiple grade-levels.[12] The test has components in Reading, English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies (the topics administered depend on grade level). Students are required to pass all components of the exam as a prerequisite for graduation. This test is the state's primary means of assessing schools' performance, and TAKS student passage rates consistently ranks high on administrators' top priorities since state funding is in part a function of TAKS performance. Despite the high salience of TAKS scores, there is considerable variation across districts. In 2005, for example, the percentage of all students who passed all components of the exam ranged from 21 percent to 98 percent (mean = 63; standard deviation = 12) across Texas school districts.

In using TAKS pass rates as the primary measure of performance, several adjustments were made. In 2003, the state of Texas changed its mandatory examination from the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) to the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS). While district-level performance on these two exams is highly correlated, there are some significant differences. The TAKS exam is generally thought to be a more difficult exam and includes more topic areas.[13] Thus, in the transition from TAAS to TAKS, district scores, on average, declined significantly. The average district's pass rate fell by 19 points in 2003, the year the TAKS took effect. The TEA, realizing districts would need to adjust for the new exam, provided a transitionary

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Prior to 2003, Texas administered the Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS). While this test is somewhat different from the TAKS, the correlation between performance on the TAAS and the TAKS is 0.77.

[13] The TAAS exam only had Writing, Reading and Mathematics.

period where the state's level of acceptable performance would be lower for districts initially and the new standards would gradually faze in.

Since this project is interested in past performance, this change in the exam poses a potential problem, since a district's poor performance may simply be the result of a change in the measurement instrument rather than in an actual decline in performance. To account for this possibility, a relative measure of the TAKS pass rate is used; namely:

$$\frac{(\overline{T}_s - T_i)}{\sigma_T} \qquad \textbf{[3.1]}$$

where $\overline{T}_s$ is the state average TAKS pass rate, $T_i$ is the TAKS pass rate for district *i*, and $\sigma_T$ is the standard deviation of statewide TAKS pass rates. This, then, provides a measure where a district's pass rate is compared to the average pass rate for the state. Using a relative rather than absolute measure should make the performance measure less sensitive to the change in the testing instrument since this change was felt statewide. This is also a measure of failure rather than performance, in that positive values represent below average performance and negative values represent above average performance. The measure is standardized and, in the models, lagged to reflect past performance. Thus, we would hypothesize that this measure would be positively related to the political intervention (i.e. higher failure leads to more intervention).

In examining political responsiveness to bureaucratic performance, a core contention articulated above is that the level of policy salience is important in determining the proclivity of responsiveness; thus, several other performance indicators

that vary on this dimension are used. These are separated into highly or universally salient policy outputs and low salience or conditionally salient policy issues. The latter includes policy outputs that may be considered salient to some, but not in all circumstances.

Arguably, TAKS exam pass rates are the most universally salient policy output for Texas school districts. Indeed, over two-thirds of superintendents rank it as the number one problem facing their district.[14] In addition to TAKS exams, three other highly salient outputs are considered: graduation rates, drop out rates and attendance rates. Graduation rates are used universally as an indicator of academic success by researchers, the media, administrators and parents alike. Indeed, this is a definitive measure of educational achievement and carries social, emotional and financial implications for students and their parents. An opposite, but equally salient measure of academic performance is a district's dropout rates. This too is highly salient to parents, the media and school district officials. Not only do high dropout rates create a negative public image and reputation for the district, but it can have economic consequences. Indeed, public schools are funded, in part, based on enrollments; hence, high dropout rates results in fewer state funds for the district. Finally, I use attendance rates as a salient measure of performance. Since Texas operates under compulsory education laws, school districts care about attendance rates. Indeed, one component of the formula

[14] In a 2007 superintendent survey (the fourth wave of Meier and O'Toole's Superintendent Management Survey), 66.8 percent of superintendents ranked TAKS scores as the most important problem in their district.

for state funding of public school districts is the average daily attendance rate. Thus, school districts have a fiscal incentive to ensure that attendance is high.

The second set of policy outputs this chapter examines are labeled low salience or conditionally salient outputs/outcomes; namely, the percent College Ready graduates, average SAT/ACT scores, and the TAKS pass rates for low-income students, black students and Latino students. Individuals wishing to attend Texas institutions of higher education are required to take the Texas Higher Education Assessment (THEA) exam.[15] High school graduates who score high enough on this exam are given the designation "College Ready," while those who do not meet the minimum score are required to enroll in remedial college courses. The level of salience this performance measure holds will vary greatly depending on the preferences and expectations of the core clientele of the school district. School districts serving low-income and low educational attainment populations are more likely to view college readiness as a secondary or tertiary objective. When college attendance is an exception, not the expectation, measure such as percent of students who are "College Ready" may be considered an additional benefit, but not a key measure of performance. This equally applies to average SAT and ACT pass rates. Students in low-income districts are less likely to even take these exams in the first place, thus, the number of students these measures apply to is smaller in poor districts than in wealthy districts where most students take these exams and intend to apply to colleges. Indeed, on average, only 50 percent of students took the ACT or SAT

[15] Students who score high enough on the ACT or SAT exams are exempt from the THEA and retain the status of "College Ready." In 2003, the THEA exam replaced the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP). There is no difference, however, between the two in terms of content and cutoff points for "College Ready" status.

in districts where at least 75 percent of students were classified as low-income compared to over 70 percent of students in school districts with less than 25 percent low-income students.

The second set of conditionally salient outputs deal with TAKS exam performance for sub-groups within the district; in particular, the pass rates for low-income, black and Latino students. In 2005, the median district had 3 percent black students, 22.5 percent Latino students, and 52.5 percent low-income students. These groups generally tend to be politically underrepresented and lack political clout compared to Anglos and the wealthy. Since they also numerically tend to be in the minority – with the exception of low-income students – district performance on these indicators are less likely to rise to the level of salience required to incite a response from political elites. Thus, we would not expect political responsiveness to ensue as a result of poor performance on these indicators. In examining the effect of performance on political intervention, lagged (pervious year) measures of these variables are used.

*Political Responsiveness*

Perhaps the most difficult aspect to this project is developing a measure of political responsiveness. In the case of Texas school districts, a districts most direct political link would be with its school board. School board members are elected and have a wide range of authority from hiring and firing the superintendent, to setting the budget, setting tax rates, and developing general education policy. Despite their

importance, data on school boards in terms of their activities, preferences, and actions are sparse.

While quality school board data are nearly nonexistent, Kenneth Meier and Larry O'Toole administered a unique survey to over 1000 Texas school districts in 2000, 2002, and 2005.[16] The surveys were sent to school district superintendents and asked a variety of questions concerning goals, management styles, and time allocations. In the Meier-O'Toole survey, one item asks superintendents how often they have contact with the school board and is measured on a six-point scale ranging from never to daily (modal category = "weekly"). While this is clearly not a direct measure of political intervention, it is, arguably, a proxy for political attention paid to a school district's management. If school board members are concerned with district performance, one would expect that their interactions with the district superintendent would increase. Indeed, it would be difficult for school board members to change managerial behavior if there were little interaction between them. This measure, then, provides a rudimentary, yet fundamental indicator of school board "intervention." Granted, increased contact does not inherently suggest "intervention" or responsiveness to failure. However, if contact is systematically higher in districts that experience past failure, *ceteris paribus*, it might be an indication that they are directly working with the superintendent to remedy the past failure. Thus, the assumption is not that school board members *only* interact with superintendents to address problems; however, when problems do exist, the assumption is that interactions between school board members and the superintendent will increase

[16] I would like to thank Ken Meier and Larry O'Toole for generously providing me with these data.

provided that the school board members recognize and care about the failure (i.e. the output is salient).[17]

These survey data were merged with performance and control data obtained from the Texas Education Agency. The first hypothesis, then, predicts that superintendents in school districts that performed poorly in the past will have higher levels of contact with the school board holding all else equal. This pattern, however, should only exist in cases where past failure was in a salient policy area. Thus, for example, political contact should be higher if the district experienced poor performance on overall TAKS pass rates – a universally salient output – but not necessarily if the district performed poorly on Latino TAKS pass rates – a conditionally salient output.

To test the first hypotheses, an ordered logit model is used.[18] The dependent variable is the scale measuring the level of contact superintendents report having with the school board. The key independent variables are district performance in the previous year. We expect the previous year's performance to be negatively related to the level of contact. That is, school districts that perform more poorly will be more likely to have contact with the school board than will schools that performed well. In addition to past performance, the model includes several other variables that may explain the level of

[17] One question in the survey asks superintendents how they would rate the quality of school board support. The amount of contact superintendents report having with the school board is negatively related to their assessment of school board support. This suggests that increased contact is less often the result of "friendships" between the school board and superintendents, but rather suggests conflict at some level.
[18] This models produces identical results (in terms of direction and significance) when OLS is used. However, since the dependent variable is essentially a five-point categorical variable (it is a six-point scale but there are no entries in the lowest category), an ordered logit model is more appropriate than OLS.

interaction between school boards and superintendents. Generally, political interaction is modeled as:

$$C = \beta_1 P + \beta_2 M + \beta_3 O + \varepsilon \quad \textbf{[3.2]}$$

where

C is the amount of political-managerial Contact

P is past Performance

M is a vector of Managerial factors

O is a vector of Organizational characteristics

and ε is a random error term.

While contact and past performance have already been defined, a brief discussion of the measures comprised in these terms is warranted.

*Management*

Two key aspects of management are expected to influence the amount of contact between political actors and public administrators. The first is managerial networking and the second is managerial experience. In their work, Meier and O'Toole (2001) have developed a measure of managerial networking – a key component of the M term in the model above – that examines the degree to which superintendents network in their external environment. To create the measure of managerial networking, Meier and O'Toole factor analyze the degree to which superintendents interact with local business leaders, other superintendents, state legislators, and the Texas Education Agency. Conceptually, superintendents who engage in more networking with these actors may be

more likely to interact with school board members regardless of past performance. Therefore, included in the model is an overall managerial networking measure to control for superintendents' propensity to network.

Interaction between school boards and superintendents may similarly be contingent on the amount of experience the manager has within with district. Conceptually, managers with ample experience within a district develop greater independence from the school board and thus experience less frequent contact. Less experienced managers may have a greater reliance on school board guidance and approval lending to increased levels of contact. To control for managerial experience, I include a measure from the Meier-O'Toole survey of the superintendent's length of employment in the district in any capacity with the expectation that longer tenure should result in less political contact.

*Organizational Characteristics*

Organizational characteristics can encompass a variety of variables including both controllable and uncontrollable factors. Such factors may influence the propensity of political involvement with administration and, thus, ought to be accounted for. One set of organizational factors are related to personnel issues. Excessive instability within an organization can lead to a host of problems; hence, contact between school board members and superintendents may be higher in organizations that suffer from high levels of personnel instability. To control for this, a measure of teacher instability is included

in the model, which is simply the percentage of annual teacher turnover within the district.

Like personnel instability, issues surrounding personnel qualifications may be of concern to school board members, prompting increased levels of interaction with administrators. Individuals wishing to teach in Texas, in addition to holding a bachelor's degree, are currently required take teacher training courses and pass the Texas Examinations of Educator Standards (TEXES) exam to gain teacher certification. The Texas State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC), however, allows school districts to apply for temporary teaching certifications, which allows districts to hire individuals who do not yet have the standard teacher certification. Individuals with temporary certification are required to obtain full certification within three years of gaining the temporary certification. We may expect, then, that districts with high levels of teacher with temporary certification (rather than full certification), may experience increased challenges and uncertainty with respect to retaining adequate levels of personnel. These concerns may increase the amount of interaction between school board members and administrators. Thus, I control for this possibility by including a variable measuring the number of uncertified teachers (i.e. those lacking full certification) as a percentage of all teachers.

A related personnel/organizational factor that has the potential to affect political-bureaucratic interactions is the adequate supply of personnel. Pupil-teacher ratios are commonly thought to be linked to performance, where smaller class size is associated

with higher performance (but see Hanushek 1998). In districts with large pupil-teacher ratios, school board members may be concerned with how this may affect performance as well as the public image reflected by having large classes. This may, in turn, prompt increased interaction with the superintendent. To account for this, I include a measure of class size, which is simply the student-teacher ratio, with the expectation that larger class sizes will be associated with increased contact.

The final personnel-related variable I control for is teacher experience. Similar to teacher qualification, increased teacher experience may provide a more predicable, smooth operating organization. This reduction in uncertainty may alleviate school board members' concerns, thus reducing political involvement in administrative affairs. To control for this, I include a measure of the average number of years of teacher experience in the district with the expectation that higher levels of experience will be associated with less contact, all else being equal.

In addition to personnel-related organizational characteristics, resource-based organizational factors may be important. The direction of this relationship could conceptually be either positive or negative. Resource-strapped organizations may have difficultly in finding ways to fund programs and may be forced to make trade-offs in terms of where resources are allocated. In making such decisions, school board members may be more likely to interact with the superintendent. Alternatively, districts with ample resources may engage in more extensive program building. This activity

may also entail increased interaction and coordination between the school board and the superintendent.

To control for the potential effect resources may have on political-administrative interactions, I employ three measures. The first is average teacher salaries (in $1000) within the district. The second variable is total revenue per pupil (in $1000). The final resource measure is the amount of state funding (logged) the district receives. State funding often comes with restrictions and stipulations; thus, increased state funding may result in increased consultation between the school board and school administration to ensure state requirements are met. Finally, I control for school size (student enrollment in 1000s). Larger districts are likely to have more stakeholders with competing interests that must be addressed. This may require increased political-administrative interaction. Table 3.1 presents summary statistics for dependent and independent variables used in testing the first hypothesis.

Table 3.2 presents the results from the first model. Since the dependent variable and several key independent variables come from the Meier-O'Toole survey, these measures were only collected in survey years, namely 2000, 2002 and 2005. Thus, these models only used data from these years. To control for variation across time, yearly dummy variables were included. Tests for non-constant error variance indicated that heteroskedasticity was not a problem.[19]

[19] The results are essentially identical when robust standard errors or clustered standard errors are used.

**Table 3.1. Summary Statistics for Model 1**

| Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political Contact | 4.25 | 0.89 | 2 | 6 |
| Lagged TAKS Pass Rate | 77.89 | 11.42 | 14 | 100 |
| Standardized Relative TAKS Measure | 0.00 | 0.97 | -2.43 | 4.96 |
| Managerial Networking | 0.03 | 0.99 | -2.71 | 3.67 |
| Managerial Experience (Years) | 9.23 | 9.37 | 0 | 44 |
| % Teacher Turnover | 17.00 | 7.66 | 0 | 61.11 |
| Student-Teacher Ratio | 12.65 | 2.39 | 3.30 | 30.47 |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | 4.63 | 5.19 | 0 | 40.4 |
| Average Teacher Experience (Years) | 12.30 | 2.25 | 2.60 | 22.45 |
| Average Teacher Salary ($1000) | 36.80 | 2.75 | 28.10 | 49.02 |
| Revenue per Pupil ($1000) | 8.07 | 2.50 | 1.76 | 42.90 |
| Logged State Aid | 10.50 | 3.70 | 5.41 | 19.44 |
| Enrollment (1000s) | 4.06 | 10.66 | 0.02 | 163.56 |

**Findings**

Immediately noticeable is that past performance failure is positive and statistically significant.[20] This implies that contact between school board members and superintendents is higher when the district performed poorly in the previous year. This

[20] Recall that this measure is standardized and is a relative measure where higher values are associated with lower pass rates relative to the state average for a given year.

**Table 3.2. Past Performance Failure and Political Contact**

| | Political Contact |
|---|---|
| *Past Performance Failure* | *0.130** |
| | *(0.052)* |
| Managerial Networking | 0.806** |
| | (0.061) |
| Superintendent's Experience in District | -0.015** |
| | (0.005) |
| % Teacher Turnover | -0.001 |
| | (0.007) |
| Average Teacher Experience | 0.004 |
| | (0.026) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.005 |
| | (0.009) |
| Student-Teacher Ratio | 0.143** |
| | (0.031) |
| Average Teacher Salary (in $1000s) | 0.043 |
| | (0.025) |
| Logged State Aid | 0.066 |
| | (0.046) |
| Revenue Per Pupil (in $1000s) | 0.050 |
| | (0.027) |
| District Size (in 1000s) | 0.018** |
| | (0.006) |
| 2002 | -0.771** |
| | (0.140) |
| 2005 | -0.840* |
| | (0.370) |
| Observations | 1739 |
| Cut1 -0.88 (0.76) | |
| Cut2 0.88 (0.75) | |
| Cut3 3.61 (0.75) | |
| Cut4 5.88 (0.76) | |

Order Logistic Regression Estimates
(Standard errors in parentheses) * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

evidence supports the idea that elected officials are concerned about bureaucratic performance and will engage the bureaucracy when performance becomes unsatisfactory. Not surprisingly, managerial networking dominates the model, independently explaining about 4 percent of the variation in the dependent variable.[21] This suggests that superintendents who engage in more external networking with other actors (i.e., business leaders, other superintendents, state legislators), are more likely to have contact with the school board. This, then, controls for the *superintendent's* proclivity to interact with others. Also, as expected, managerial experience is negative and significant. This indicates that newer superintendents engage in more contact with school boards than superintendents with longer tenure. The only other statistically significant variables were student-teacher ratios and district size, suggesting that larger class sizes and increased enrollments have a positive effect on the probability of school board-superintendent contact, *ceteris paribus*.

Since the models in Table 3.2 estimate the parameters via ordered logit, the coefficients are not easily interpretable in terms of the effects on the level of contact; thus, Table 3.3 presents the predicted probabilities for the model. Past performance has a considerable effect on the probability of having contact with the school board more than once a week as well as weekly contact (the modal category). The predicted probability of more than weekly contact with the school board for a high failure district (pass rate 2 standard deviations below the state mean) is about 34 percent. This is about 10 percent higher than the predicted probability for a high performing district.

[21] This is based on the change in the "pseudo" $R^2$, from 0.072 to 0.115 in the model below.

Alternatively, the predicted probability of weekly contact under high levels of past failure is about 51 percent, compared to 58 percent under considerably above average performance. This pattern is also seen in monthly contact, where the predicted probabilities are forty percent higher under high performance than under low performance (11% vs. 6.9%). The likelihood for daily contact, though consistently low, is nearly twice as high under high failure than it is under high performance (6.5% vs. 3.8%).

**Table 3.3. Predicted Probabilities for Different Levels of Past Failure**

| | P(Y=Yearly) | P(Y=Monthly) | P(Y=Weekly) | P(Y=Weekly+) | P(Y=Daily) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Past Failure = High (2)** | 0.015 | 0.069 | *0.512* | *0.338* | 0.065 |
| **Past Failure = Average (0)** | 0.020 | 0.088 | *0.555* | *0.288* | 0.049 |
| **Past Failure = Low (-2)** | 0.027 | 0.113 | *0.583* | *0.239* | 0.038 |

Table 3.4 presents the first differences for these findings based on simulations where all other variables are held at their means. These simulations allow us to obtain measures of uncertainty with respect to our estimates. The results indicate that the difference in the probability of having *more than weekly* school board-superintendent interactions between high and low performing districts is about 10 percent and is statistically significant. As expected, the opposite trend is seen with weekly contact, where low performance reduces the likelihood of weekly contact in substitution for more

than weekly contact. Indeed, the probability of observing the two highest levels of contact increase as failure increases, while the lower three levels decrease.

**Table 3.4 First Differences in Predicted Probabilities**
**Change Past Failure from -2 to 2**

| Outcome | *Mean* | Std. Err. | 95% CI | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ΔP(Y=Yearly)** | *-0.027* | 0.004 | -0.015 | -0.044 |
| **ΔP(Y=Monthly)** | *-0.044* | 0.017 | -0.011 | -0.078 |
| **ΔP(Y=Weekly)** | *-0.071* | 0.026 | -0.020 | -0.119 |
| **ΔP(Y=Weekly +)** | *0.100* | 0.036 | 0.167 | 0.027 |
| **ΔP(Y=Daily)** | *0.027* | 0.010 | 0.048 | 0.007 |

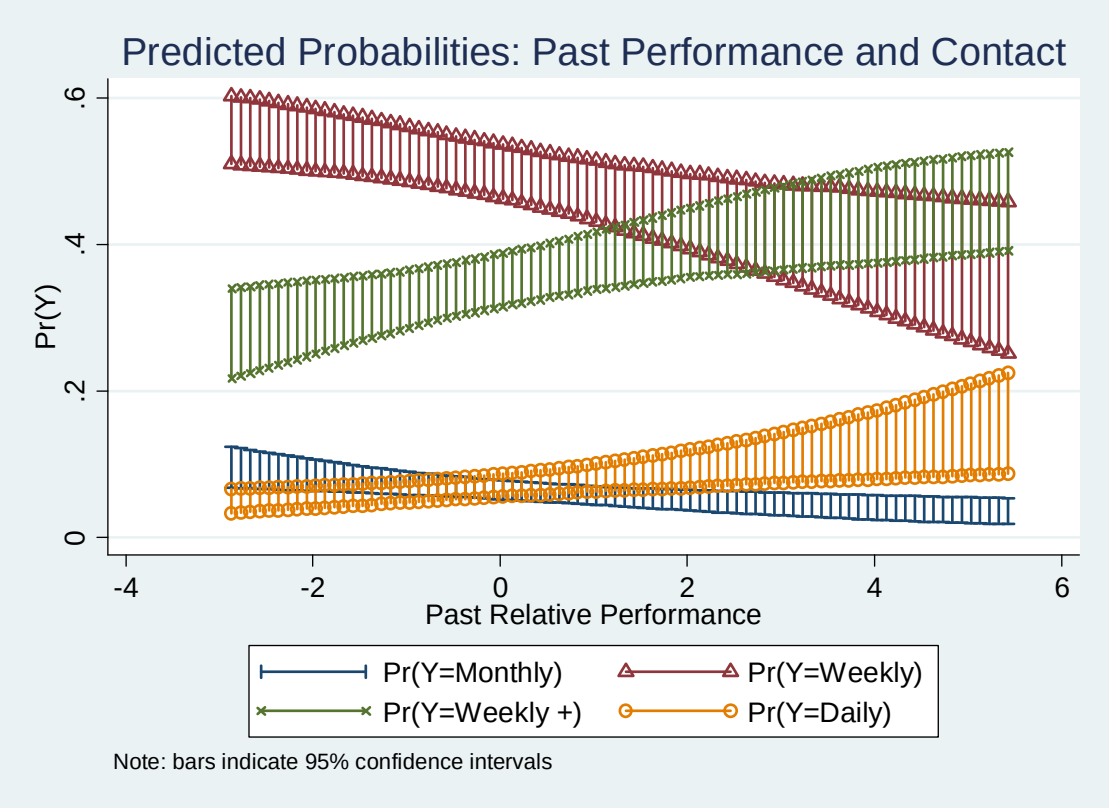
First differences and confidence intervals are based on Clarify simulations in Stata

Using estimates derived from the simulations, Figure 3.2 portrays this pattern visually. The x-axis represents different levels of past failure on the pervious year's TAKS exam where higher values indicate more failure. The y-axis displays the predicted probabilities based on the model estimates holding all other variables at their means. What is immediately apparent is that as failure increases, the likelihood of weekly contact declines as the likelihood of more than weekly contact increases. At a failure value of approximately 1, the differences in probabilities associated with these two values are statistically indistinguishable. A similar pattern can be seen with the daily and monthly contact, where the probability of observing daily contact – while still small – becomes significantly higher as the level of past failure increases.

These results appear to support the hypothesis that poor performance leads to increased political involvement. Recall, however, that this hypothesis is conditional on the salience of the policy output or outcome. District-wide pass rates on the TAKS

exam are highly salient to the majority of Texas districts. Indeed, the state bases their district rating system largely on districts' performance on this indicator. Yet,

**Figure 3.2 Predicted Probabilities of Contact for Different Levels of Past Failure**




theoretically, we do not expect political actors to respond to every indicator – only those they deem salient. As discussed earlier, this chapter examines a number of other policy outputs and outcomes that should vary on this dimension of public salience. The universally salient measures include graduation rates, attendance rates, and annual dropout rates. Policy outputs considered less salient or conditionally salient are TAKS pass rates for low-income students, black students, and Latino students, as well as average SAT and ACT scores and the percent of students who score high enough on the

THEA exam to be deemed "College Ready." Also included in this group are 4-year dropout rates. While annual dropout rates are considered salient, 4-year dropout rates use a more complicated formula in that they track student progress over a 4-year period. The impact of this measure is likely to be more muddled since the failure may have occurred years in the past. Conceptually, this comports with work by Ringquist,

**Table 3.5 Descriptive Statistics**

| Variable | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Universally Salient Outputs* | | | | | |
| Graduation Rate | 1648 | 87.84 | 9.18 | 0 | 100 |
| Attendance Rate | 1740 | 95.98 | 0.84 | 92 | 99.4 |
| Annual Dropout Rates | 1719 | 0.75 | 0.89 | 0 | 10.1 |
| *Conditionally Salient Outputs* | | | | | |
| 4-Year Dropout Rates | 1645 | 6.19 | 6.13 | 0 | 45.5 |
| Low-Income TAKS Pass Rate | 1729 | 70.81 | 12.38 | 14 | 100 |
| % "College Ready" | 1599 | 21.17 | 11.63 | 0 | 71.6 |
| Average SAT Score | 1262 | 972.70 | 76.43 | 654 | 1250 |
| Average ACT Score | 1520 | 19.88 | 1.62 | 14.7 | 25.1 |
| Black TAKS Pass Rate | 1125 | 65.00 | 16.41 | 0 | 100 |
| Latino TAKS Pass Rate | 1622 | 70.55 | 13.86 | 8 | 100 |

Worsham and Eisner (2003) where they find that both policy salience and policy complexity influence politicians' propensity to attempt to influence bureaucratic behavior. A highly salient output (e.g. dropout rates), if complex (e.g. 4-year dropout

rates), is less likely to attract political involvement than would otherwise be expected. Table 3.5 presents the descriptive statistics for these 10 dependent variables.

Table 3.6 presents the results from these 10 models. The first three models include the highly/universally salient outputs, while the final six models present the less salient outputs/outcomes. In all three cases, past performance is related to political contact, where poorer performance is associated with higher probabilities of contact. Higher graduation and attendance rates in the previous academic year are associated with less school board-superintendent interaction. Alternatively, with the exception of low-income student TAKS performance, past performance on the low salient outputs had no effect on the frequency of contact. This is exactly what we would expect theoretically; that is, political actors respond to performance indicators they believe are salient. This explains, in part, the discrepancy observed in the literature on this topic, where some research portrays actively involved political elites while other research implies a *lassiez-faire* political system that only responds when either public outrage or catastrophe strikes.

*The Effects of Contact on Management*

The second empirical question this chapter examines is what effects, if any, does political intervention have on managerial behavior. To quantitatively test whether political contact can influence administrative behavior, a measure of managerial behavior is needed. Fortunately, the Meier-O'Toole survey contains at least two measures that can be used to test this hypothesis. The first measure is the managerial

## Table 3.6. Political Responsiveness to Failure and Issue Salience

| | High/Universally Salient Outputs | | | Low/Conditionally Salient Outputs | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **DV = Contact with School Board** | **Graduation Rate** | **Attendance Rate** | **Annual Dropout Rate** | **4-Year Dropout Rate** | **Low Income Pass Rate** | **Black Pass Rate** | **Latino Pass Rate** | **College Ready** | **Average SAT Score** | **Average ACT Score** |
| *Lagged Performance* | *-0.016* | *-0.197* | *0.091* | *0.007* | *-0.015* | *-0.003* | *-0.004* | *0.005* | *0.000* | *-0.015* |
| | *(0.006)*** | *(0.060)*** | *(0.056)†* | *(0.009)* | *(0.005)*** | *(0.004)* | *(0.004)* | *(0.004)* | *(0.001)* | *(0.032)* |
| Managerial Networking | 0.794 | 0.806 | 0.807 | 0.793 | 0.811 | 0.773 | 0.794 | 0.769 | 0.769 | 0.784 |
| | (0.063)** | (0.061)** | (0.062)** | (0.063)** | (0.062)** | (0.078)** | (0.064)** | (0.064)** | (0.074)** | (0.067)** |
| District Size (1000s) | 0.016 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.018 | 0.018 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.017 |
| | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** | (0.006)** |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.156 | 0.126 | 0.153 | 0.169 | 0.144 | 0.231 | 0.150 | 0.181 | 0.245 | 0.180 |
| | (0.034)** | (0.031)** | (0.032)** | (0.033)** | (0.032)** | (0.047)** | (0.034)** | (0.034)** | (0.045)** | (0.036)** |
| Average Teacher Salary | 0.034 | 0.043 | 0.041 | 0.034 | 0.042 | 0.011 | 0.030 | 0.023 | 0.003 | 0.028 |
| | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.025) | (0.026) | (0.025) | (0.031) | (0.026) | (0.026) | (0.030) | (0.027) |
| Teacher Turnover | 0.003 | 0.001 | 0.004 | 0.005 | -0.002 | 0.002 | -0.001 | 0.007 | -0.005 | 0.005 |
| | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.007) | (0.010) | (0.007) | (0.008) | (0.009) | (0.008) |
| Superintendent's Tenure | -0.016 | -0.016 | -0.016 | -0.015 | -0.015 | -0.014 | -0.015 | -0.015 | -0.016 | -0.016 |
| | (0.005)** | (0.005)** | (0.005)** | (0.005)** | (0.005)** | (0.006)* | (0.005)** | (0.005)** | (0.006)** | (0.005)** |
| % State Aid | 0.070 | 0.078 | 0.077 | 0.073 | 0.065 | 0.046 | 0.083 | 0.052 | 0.044 | 0.036 |
| | (0.049) | (0.045) | (0.046) | (0.049) | (0.046) | (0.061) | (0.048) | (0.051) | (0.060) | (0.053) |
| Revenue Per Pupil | 0.079 | 0.053 | 0.066 | 0.080 | 0.062 | 0.102 | 0.066 | 0.079 | 0.164 | 0.067 |
| | (0.033)* | (0.027) | (0.029)* | (0.033)* | (0.031)* | (0.060) | (0.038) | (0.034)* | (0.057)** | (0.035) |
| Teacher Experience | 0.008 | 0.002 | 0.002 | 0.007 | 0.001 | 0.024 | -0.002 | -0.002 | -0.024 | -0.008 |
| | (0.028) | (0.026) | (0.027) | (0.028) | (0.026) | (0.036) | (0.028) | (0.029) | (0.034) | (0.030) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.002 | -0.003 | -0.002 | -0.002 | -0.004 | 0.008 | 0.001 | 0.003 | 0.004 | 0.004 |
| | (0.010) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.010) | (0.010) | (0.014) | (0.010) | (0.011) | (0.013) | (0.011) |
| 2002 | -0.866 | -0.724 | -0.770 | -0.827 | -0.707 | -0.882 | -0.792 | -0.858 | -0.939 | -0.807 |
| | (0.145)** | (0.140)** | (0.142)** | (0.154)** | (0.143)** | (0.183)** | (0.148)** | (0.148)** | (0.168)** | (0.153)** |
| 2005 | -0.880 | -0.934 | -0.913 | -0.904 | -1.030 | -0.815 | -1.028 | -0.729 | -0.826 | -0.575 |
| | (0.403)* | (0.365)* | (0.380)* | (0.410)* | (0.373)** | (0.532) | (0.399)* | (0.419) | (0.518) | (0.436) |
| Observations | 1648 | 1740 | 1719 | 1645 | 1729 | 1125 | 1622 | 1599 | 1262 | 1520 |

Ordered Logistic Regression. (Standard errors in parentheses).† significant at 10%; * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

networking measure discussed above (see Meier and O'Toole 2001). More specifically, this measure is based on factor analysis on the self-reported frequency of interaction between superintendents and the four following entities: state legislators, the Texas Education Agency, other superintendents and local business leaders. The factor analysis produces a single factor with an eigenvalue of 2.09.[22] Variants of this measure have been used extensively in recent research on public management. In much of this research, managerial networking has consistently been found to be an important predictor of organizational performance (Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2003, 2005; O'Toole and Meier 2004b; Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004; Goerdel 2006).

From a theoretical perspective, O'Toole and Meier (1999) argue that networks provide public managers a means to manage their environments. O'Toole and Meier (1999) argue that "management can either adopt a strategy of buffering the environment or actively seek to exploit the environment for the benefit of the program system" (517). These networks function both as a mechanism for exploitation purposes as well as a buffer for absorbing political pressures. Managerial networking, then, involves managers making conscious efforts to engage their external environment. Political actors, however, may pressure administrators to focus on internal, core tasks if they are failing to meet adequate standards, which may reduce a manager's ability to engage in extensive networking. It could be the case that networking is a luxury managers can

[22] This measure of managerial networking is slightly different from Meier and O'Toole's (2001) original measure in that it excludes contact with school board members and provides a unique measure for each district for each year the survey was administered.

engage in only once they have achieved a satisfactory level of success on core tasks, such as state mandated tests. That is, political pressure may result in a decline in managerial networking, as managers who experience political contact refocus their energies on internal issues rather than external networking. To test whether this is the case, we can look at how past contact with political principals changes the level of networking in which managers engage.

The second measure we can use to test whether managerial behavior is influenced by political contact is a survey-item that asks superintendents what percentage of their time is spent on internal management of the district versus interacting with non-district personnel in a typical week. Conceptually, as with managerial networking, political contact may influence the extent to which managers work on managing the district internally versus interacting with non-district stakeholders. Increased political contact may cause managers to refocus their attention to internal administrative issues rather than allocating their time to interacting with non-district personnel (e.g. politics).

This can be tested by examining the effect past political contact has on changes in the networking and internal management activities of superintendents. To do this, measures of the *change* in the networking and internal management variables were created. That is, $\Delta N = N_t - N_{t-1}$, where N is the networking scores from the respective

years/surveys. The same is done for the internal management variable.[23] This implies, of course, that only respondents who replied to at least two consecutive surveys can be used, thus significantly cutting the number of usable observations. What this provides us with, though, is a measure of change in managerial behavior across two time points.[24] Table 3.7 presents the descriptive statistics for the networking and internal management variables as well as the change variables (i.e. the dependent variables) used in the estimation.

**Table 3.7 Descriptive Statistics for Networking and Internal Management**

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Managerial Networking** | 767 | -0.12 | 1.06 | -2.71 | 3.67 |
| **Δ Managerial Networking** | 767 | 0.11 | 1.56 | -4.36 | 5.7 |
| **Internal Management** | 366 | 72.65 | 13.63 | 20 | 98 |
| **Δ Internal Management** | 366 | -0.4 | 15.57 | -60 | 55 |

The key independent variable in this model is past political contact[25] with the expectation that higher levels of past political contact will result in reductions in

[23] The internal management question was only asked in the first two surveys (2000 and 2002); thus, the model examining the effect of contact on the change in internal management only include 2002.
[24] Admittedly, the 2- and 3-year gaps in the surveys induce more error than desirable. However, recent work by Meier and O'Toole (2005) suggests that managerial networking is a management rather than organizational characteristic. This implies that networking patterns are not likely to change drastically overtime. Indeed, lagged measures of networking and internal management – despite being 2- and 3-year lags – are statistically significant predictors of current networking and internal management.
[25] This is simply the self-reported frequency of contact with school board members from the previous survey.

networking compared to previous levels. Alternatively, higher levels of political contact are expected to increase self-reported levels of internal management at the expense of external management. Table 3.8 presents the results from these models. In addition to school board contact, several other variables are included in the model. The absolute, contemporaneous level of managerial networking and, in the second model, internal management are included, and, in addition to the variable used in the first model a couple other measures are included. Specifically, the percent of low-income, black and Latino students are included as control variables.

The results indicate, as expected, that past school board contact is associated with managers decreasing the amount of time they spend networking in their external environment. School board contact in the past is also associated with increased managerial efforts at internal management.[26] A one category increase in past political contact (e.g. from weekly to more than weekly) results in about a .39 decrease in managerial networking, or over one third of a standard deviation. A similar increase in school board contact is expected to increase the time allocated to internal management by about 4 percentage points. These results are particularly impressive given that the lag time between political contact and the observed change in managerial behavior is two to three years. With better data and measures these relationships may be even stronger.

[26] Several variations of these models were run including the inclusion of the contemporaneous level of school board contact, which was statistically insignificant in both models. A Breush-Pagan test of independence suggests that the errors across these models are not independent ($\chi^2 = 4.6$, $p = 0.03$); however, results from seemingly unrelated regression models were nearly identical.

**Table 3.8 Political Contact and Managerial Networking and Internal Management**

| Dependent Variable = | Δ Managerial Networking | Δ Internal Management |
|---|---|---|
| Lagged School Board Contact | -0.385** | 3.905 |
| | (0.036) | (0.823)** |
| Managerial Networking | 1.013** | 0.040 |
| | (0.031) | (0.823) |
| Internal Management | - | 0.657 |
| | - | (0.052)** |
| Superintendent's Tenure | 0.002 | 0.024 |
| | (0.003) | (0.070) |
| Teacher Turnover | 0.007 | -0.196 |
| | (0.004) | (0.106) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.051** | -0.448 |
| | (0.015) | (0.331) |
| Average Teacher Experience | -0.018 | -0.575 |
| | (0.018) | (0.416) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.001 | -0.281 |
| | (0.006) | (0.152) |
| Average Teacher Salary | 0.031* | 0.927 |
| | (0.015) | (0.399)* |
| Instructional Expenditures (1000s) | 0.055** | -0.178 |
| | (0.007) | (0.146) |
| % Black Students | -0.005 | 0.047 |
| | (0.003) | (0.071) |
| % Latino Students | 0.001 | -0.011 |
| | (0.002) | (0.046) |
| % Low Income Students | 0.001 | 0.071 |
| | (0.003) | (0.060) |
| District Size (1000s) | -0.008* | -0.070 |
| | (0.003) | (0.094) |
| Constant | -2.924** | -76.506 |
| | (0.686) | (17.482)** |
| Observations | 767 | 366 |
| R-squared | 0.72 | 0.37 |

OLS estimates. (Standard errors in parentheses) * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

*The Effects of Political Contact on Performance*

The final question this chapter examines is whether political contact makes a difference in terms future performance. Theoretically, we would expect political intervention to result in administrative reforms, which would, in turn, ultimately result in improved performance in the future. Indeed, this is the prime intention of political assessment. Yet, political involvement in administrative affairs in and of itself is not necessarily beneficial to organizational performance. That is, unwarranted political involvement may amount to political micromanagement and political meddling. Rather, political intervention may provide benefits when there is a legitimate reason for such intervention. This implies, then, that the effects of political contact are conditional on whether contact is justified. Thus, the expectation is that political contact will have a positive effect on future performance when such contact is associated with poor past performance. Alternatively, political contact alone (i.e., when past failure is absent) is expected to have no effect, or even a negative effect on future performance.

Looked at differently, past failure is expected to continue (or at least be prolonged) if political pressure is not employed. While public managers themselves would presumably like to improve performance, there may be less of a sense of urgency if their boss (i.e. the school board) is not taking notice of the poor performance. Conversely, a superintendent in a under-performing district who is regularly hounded or even threatened by the school board regarding performance, is more likely to make performance his or her top priority and hence more likely to make changes that will improve performance.

To test this, an interactive model is used, where future performance is modeled as a function of past school board contact interacted with past failure. The expectation is that contact will positively affect performance if past failure is present. The dependent variable in this model is the change in TAKS exam performance from the performance prior to contact to that following the contact. Results for the TAKS exams are released in the spring of each year; alternatively, the surveys were administered in the fall of each survey year. Therefore, past performance is the exam pass rate in the spring prior to the survey and future performance is the exam pass rate in the spring following the survey. Therefore, the change in TAKS performance for 2001 is,

$$\Delta TAKS_{01} = TAKS_{01} - TAKS_{00} \qquad \textbf{[3.3]}$$

where $TAKS_{00}$ is the TAKS results for the 1999-2000 school year reported in the spring of 2000 and $TAKS_{01}$ is the results for the 2000-2001 school year reported in the spring of 2001. The measure of political intervention in this case would be amount of contact reported in the fall of 2000.

A variety of environmental and organizational variables are also included in the model to control for differences in these districts that may account for changes in performance (e.g. large districts may be more inertial). These include the measures of managerial characteristics, personnel-related factors, demographic characteristics, and resources. This interactive model can be depicted formally as:

$$\Delta P = \beta_1 C + \beta_2 F + \beta_3 CF + \beta_4 M + \beta_5 O + \beta_6 X + \varepsilon \qquad \textbf{[3.4]}$$

where

$\Delta P$ is change in district Performance,

*C* is the amount of political-managerial Contact,

*F* is past district Failure,

*M* is a vector of Managerial variables,

*O* is a vector of Organizational characteristics,

*X* is a vector of Environmental factors (e.g. district demographics),

ε is a random error term and the $\beta$'s are estimatable parameters.

Table 3.9 presents the results from this model. Since this is an interactive model, the coefficients are conditional. These results suggest that the effect of political contact on performance, while positive, is not statistically significant *when past failure is zero*. Since the measure of failure is relative to the state pass rate, a value of zero for past failure represents a district's pass rate was the same as the state average. This suggests that, in an average district, higher levels of political contact are not associated with future improvements in performance.

The parameter estimate for past failure is negative and statistically significant at the $p$ =0.1 level *when political contact is zero*. This, of course, is outside the range of the data (political contact ranges from 2 to 6). The coefficient for the interactive terms is positive and statistically significant, suggesting that as contact *and* past failure increase, district performance improves. To calculate the conditional effects of school board contact, the following formula is used (see Bramber, Clark and Golder 2006):

$$\frac{\partial P}{\partial C} = \beta_1 + \beta_3 F \qquad \textbf{[3.5]}$$

**Table 3.9 Political Contact, Past Failure and Future Performance**

| | **Δ in TAKS Pass Rate** |
|---|---|
| *Political Contact* | *0.233* |
| | *(0.164)* |
| *Past TAKS Failure* | *-1.173* |
| | *(0.656)†* |
| *Political Contact × Past Failure* | *0.758* |
| | *(0.150)*** |
| Managerial Networking | -0.144 |
| | (0.167) |
| Superintendent's Tenure | 0.001 |
| | (0.014) |
| Teacher Turnover | -0.041 |
| | (0.019)* |
| Student Teacher Ratio | -0.212 |
| | (0.061)** |
| Average Teacher Experience | -0.016 |
| | (0.070) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.040 |
| | (0.025) |
| Average Teacher Salary | 0.050 |
| | (0.068) |
| Instructional Expenditures (1000s) | -0.096 |
| | (0.027)** |
| % Black Students | -0.051 |
| | (0.014)** |
| % Latino Students | 0.010 |
| | (0.008) |
| % Low Income Students | -0.131 |
| | (0.012)** |
| District Size (1000s) | 0.015 |
| | (0.014) |
| 2002 | -20.690 |
| | (0.376)** |
| 2005 | 4.686 |
| | (0.353)** |
| Constant | 13.787 |
| | (2.916)** |
| Observations | 1736 |
| R-squared | 0.82 |

OLS estimates (Standard errors in parentheses) † significant at 10% * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

where $\beta_1$ is the slope for political contact, $\beta_3$ is the coefficient for the interactive term and *F* is the value for the failure variable. Similarly, we can calculate the conditional standard errors for the conditional slope of political contact for different values of failure using the following formula:

$$\hat{\sigma}_{\frac{\partial P}{\partial C}} = \sqrt{\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_1) + F^2 \text{ var}(\hat{\beta}_3) + 2F \text{ cov}(\hat{\beta}_1 \hat{\beta}_3)} \qquad \textbf{[3.6]}$$

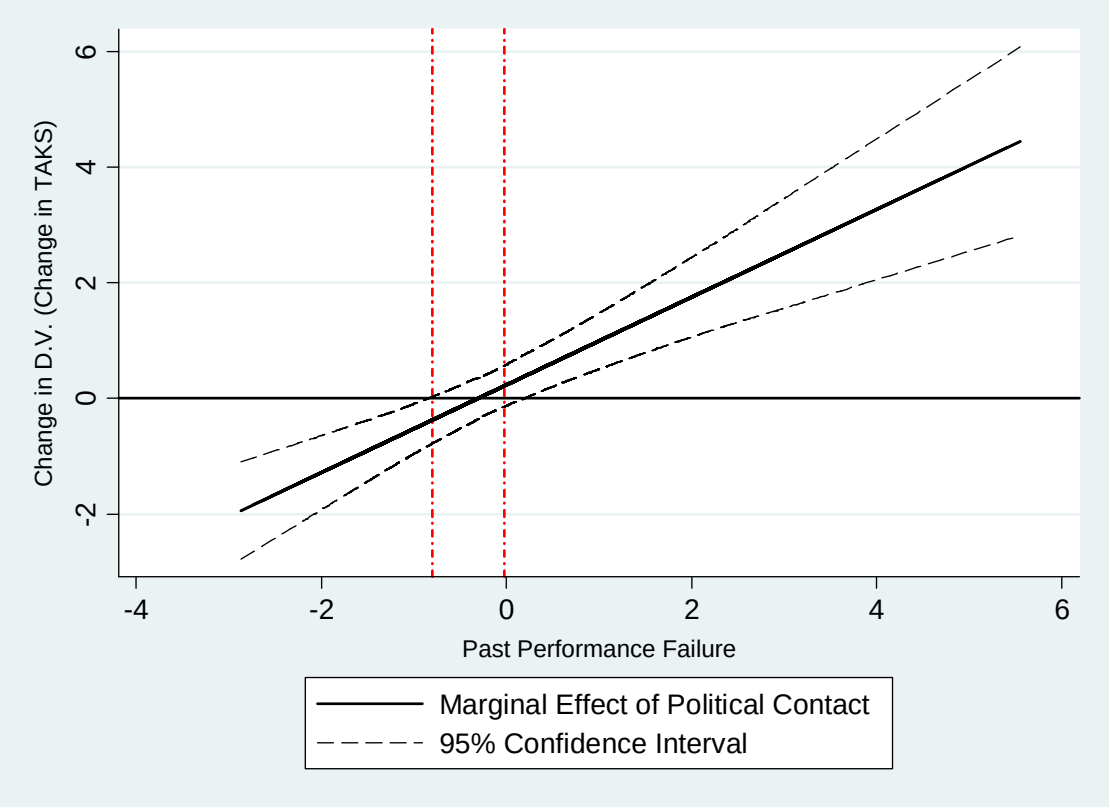
Thus, for every level of past failure, we can obtain a slope and standard error for political contact. Figure 3.3 presents these results. The y-axis depicts the marginal effect (i.e. conditional slope) of political contact on improvements in TAKS performance. The x-axis represents different levels of relative past TAKS failure, where higher values represent poorer past scores. The vertical parallel lines represent the range of values where the slopes are not statistically significant.

As can be seen, the effects of political contact are slightly positive – albeit statistically insignificant – for districts whose past TAKS pass rates matched the state average. However, as failure increases, the effects of political contact become statistically significant and increasingly positive. For example, if a district's TAKS pass rate was one standard deviation below the state mean,[27] the expected effect of school board contact on the change in future TAKS rates is about 1, suggesting that, holding all else equal, increasing political contact by one unit will improve TAKS pass rates by about 1 percent. This effect is even larger for districts where past failure was higher

[27] The numeric value of one standard deviation below the mean varies depending on the year. It ranges from about 56 percent pass rate (2003) to 79 percent pass rate (2002). In any given year, there are from 150 to 160 districts that fall into this category.

ranging from .33 (when past failure is .13) to 4.4 (when failure is 5.5). Interestingly, the effect of political contact is negative and statistically significant in districts that were performing significantly above average. More specifically, when past TAKS performance is about 0.82 standard deviations above the state mean, the effects of political contact are negative and statistically significant, ranging in size from -.39 to 1.98. This suggests that political involvement, when not needed, may actually have a negative effect on bureaucratic performance.

**Figure 3.3 Marginal Effect of Contact on Performance Conditional on Past Failure**



Similarly, the marginal effects and standard errors of past failure on performance conditional on the level of political contact can be examined by slightly modifying formulas 3.5 and 3.6.[28] Thus, we can observe what the expected effects of past failure on improvements in performance are under different levels of political intervention. The expectation is that bureaupathologies and maladministration in organizations are likely to continue unless these problems are recognized and addressed. Political intervention is one possible way such bureaupathologies can be exposed and perhaps remedied. Thus, past failure is expected to have less of an effect of performance if there is contact between school board members and superintendents.

Figure 3.4 presents the slopes for past failure conditional on the level of contact with the school board. Past failure has a positive and statistically significant effect on improvements in TAKS pass rates *if political contact is at least weekly*. The size of the effect increases as political contact increases. If political contact is less than weekly, however, the effect of past failure on TAKS improvements weakens. When school board contact is monthly or yearly, past failure is predicted to negatively affect future performance. This suggests, then, that political involvement can help to remedy bureaucratic failure and, alternatively, political neglect can result in continued maladministration and program failure.

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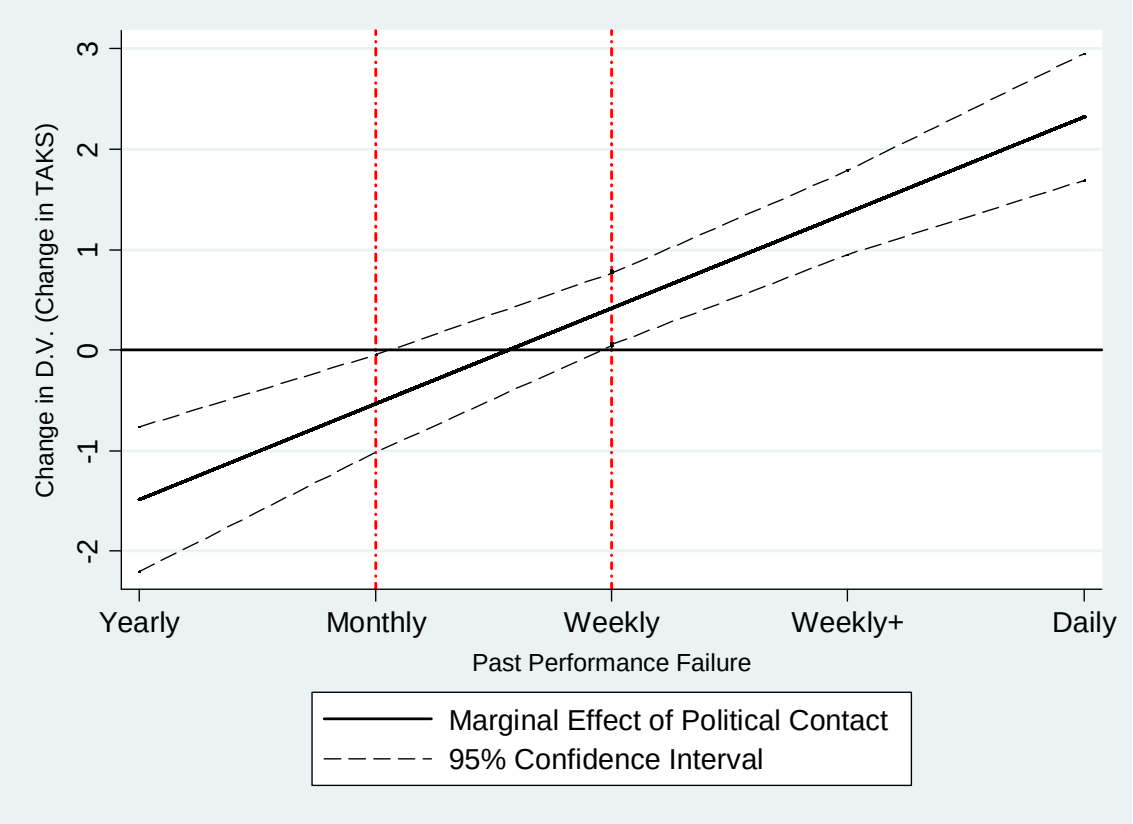
[28] The formula for the conditional slope becomes, $\frac{\partial P}{\partial F} = \beta_2 + \beta_3 C$, and the conditional standard errors are calculated as, $\hat{\sigma}_{\frac{\partial P}{\partial F}} = \sqrt{\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_2) + C^2 \text{var}(\hat{\beta}_3) + 2C\text{cov}(\hat{\beta}_2 \hat{\beta}_3)}$.

**Figure 3.4 Marginal Effect of Past Failure on Performance Conditional on Contact**




To demonstrate the magnitude of these effects, Table 3.10 presents simulated predicted values of the change in TAKS exam pass rates for four hypothetical scenarios. The first cell is the expected change in pass rates for a district that has performed significantly above the state average on the TAKS exam and has experienced virtually no political involvement from the school board. Such a district is expected to see a small decline (-1.77) in TAKS pass rates compared to their previous performance. Yet, if this same district experienced daily contact with the school board, the expected change in pass rates is considerably larger (-8.2). This suggests that a case of such political micromanagement may have a draining effect on agency performance.

When past failure is high, however, we see a different pattern. An absence of political involvement is expected to produce large negative effects (-8.06) in terms of future improvements. Yet, if a similarly poor performing district experiences high levels of involvement from the school board, the expected improvement in TAKS pass rates is positive (1.01). The results for this scenario are the opposite as the case of a high performing district, where higher levels of contact are associated with *worse* performance.

**Table 3.10 Expected Change in TAKS Under Four Scenarios**

| | | **Past Failure** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Low** | **High** |
| **Contact** | **Low** | -1.77 | -8.06 |
| | **High** | -8.2 | 1.01 |

Average expected value from 1000 simulations using Clarify. All other variables are held at their means.
Low Performance = 2 on failure index; High Performance = -2 on failure index
Low Contact = Yearly (2); High Contact = Daily (6)

## Conclusion

These findings provide some insight to the broader question this chapter began with; that is, is political assessment taking place in a systematic manner? As discussed in Chapter II, political assessment is, theoretically, a crucial part of governance (Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill 2001). Empirically, however, the research on this topic is divided. On the one hand, a wealth of literature has studied political oversight in great depth and has examined – both theoretically and empirically – the numerous ways political actors

can and do monitor and influence bureaucratic policy outcomes (e.g. McCubbins, Noll and Weingast 1989; Wood and Waterman 1991, 1993, 1994; Moe 1989). Yet, another line of research suggests that political assessment does not occur *systematically*. Rather, most bureaucratic behavior and policy outputs and outcomes are generally ignored by political elites. It is only in times of crisis (e.g. a political/policy fiasco) that political actors respond, and often for self-serving reasons (e.g. blame avoidance).

The findings presented in this chapter attempt to, at least partially, explain this discrepancy. At least for educational political-administrative arrangements, political assessment does appear to occur, albeit in a conditional manner. The key determinant in predicting whether political actors will respond to failure is whether the failure pertains to a salient policy output/outcome. Past failure is a significant predictor of political involvement *if the issue is universally salient*. Failure occurring in secondary or tertiary policy outputs does not explain differences in levels of political involvement. This finding reinforces other research that has argued policy salience is key in explaining political behavior (e.g. Gormley 1986, 1989; Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner 2003).

The evidence presented in this chapter also suggests not only do political actors respond to bureaucratic behavior and outputs, but that bureaucratic behavior is responsive to political actions. Political contact was associated with changes in both managerial networking and the amount of time managers spent on internal rather than external management. Managers who experienced higher levels of contact with the school board were more likely to reduce the extent they engaged in networking with

external actors while increasing the percent of time they spent focusing on issues within the district. Furthermore, political interactions with managers also appear to result in improved performance, but only for districts that performed poorly in the past. Alternatively, unwarranted political contact appears to have a negative effect on future performance.

These results provide some tentative answers to some of the questions posed in Chapter II. While the findings are robust and are not sensitive to model specifications, one must be careful in overstating their significance. First, these findings pertain to a particular type of political-administrative system, namely Texas school districts. School districts hold certain traits that are distinct from, say, the federal government. Thus, caution should be used in generalizing these findings. Also, there is, undoubtedly, considerable error in the measures employed. However, such error should, presumably, make it more difficult to find statistically significant results. Finding these relationships, then, given the measurement error provides some reassurance that the theoretical relationships actually exist. Thus, despite the acknowledged shortcomings of these data, the results still provide some insight into the broader question concerning the role of political assessment in the logic of governance.

While the findings get us closer to answering the questions put forward earlier, they also open up a variety of new questions. For example, what is the longer-term relationship between failure, political intervention and performance? Past research has found that managerial networking has tangible benefits for organizational performance

(e.g., Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004; Meier, O'Toole and Nicholson-Crotty 2004; O'Toole and Meier 2003, 2004; Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004; Goerdel 2006). If increased political involvement decreases managerial networking, such interactions may have long-term implications for organizational performance. That is, decreases in networking may result in declines in future organizational performance. If this is the case, we might expect organizations that experience political intervention due to poor past performance to produce temporary improvements yet experience longer term performance problems due to decreases in networking, which may work to sustain longer term organizational performance.

Furthermore, this research does not address exactly *how* gains in performance are obtained. Indeed, there are numerous ways managers and school board members could attempt to influence performance. To what extent does removing the chief administrator (i.e. the superintendent) result in improvement? Alternatively, are the gains in performance real, or are managers manipulating performance indicators as a means of coping with political pressure. Indeed, teachers and administrators frequently have been caught cheating on state test results.[29] Thus, are the improvements associated with increased political pressure the result of an increase in quality of management or simply cunning managers cutting corners? These are just a few questions that remain unanswered, and that future research should address.

[29] Some teachers have been caught actually changing the answers of students after students turn in their exams. Similarly, administrators can manipulate the classification of students (e.g. special education) so that test scores of their students do not count toward the district's accountability rating.

# CHAPTER IV

## REPRESENTATION, RESPONSIVENESS AND RELATIVE FAILURE

One of the core findings of Chapter III pertained to the importance of policy salience in determining whether political actors will respond to policy performance failure. That is, the likelihood of political contact was significantly higher if past failure occurred, but only if that past failure involved a policy output that was salient. Of the seven ostensibly non-salient – or more appropriately, conditionally salient – policy outputs examined, only one was a significant predictor of political contact.[30] Failure in the other six policy areas was not associated with an increased probability of political-administrative interaction – arguably a prerequisite for political influence.

One reason selective responsiveness occurs is that different bureaucratic (and political) institutions serve different clienteles and, thus, have different goals, priorities and demands. Parents' expectations for students' college preparedness in a wealthy, suburban district are likely different from parents' expectations in less affluent, working-class districts. Thus, we would expect the preferences and priorities of both administrators and school board members to be different in these two scenarios. Elected officials are likely to monitor those policy outputs that matter to their constituents, and ignore (perhaps unconsciously) those that do not.[31] Indeed, research has found that, at

[30] The one that was statistically significant was the TAKS pass rates for low-income students. Arguably, this policy output was significant because the proportion of low-income students in the typical district is quite high, while would result in a reduction of overall TAKS pass rates – a highly salient output.

[31] Evidence suggests that citizens evaluate political performance in a similar manner, where citizens only consider issues they deem salient in assessing politicians (Edwards, Mitchell and Welch 1995).

least for salient issues, politicians often respond to the preferences of the public in terms of the policies they adopt (e.g., Page and Shapiro 1983, Bernstein 2005). That is, rational politicians will be selectively responsive.

While this is ostensibly the proper role of democratic representation, selective political responsiveness may have negative consequences. If the interests of some segment of the community are not represented, their interests are not likely to be considered salient and, thus, not attended to. In the case of historically disadvantaged groups, such as Latinos or African Americans, inadequate representation within the elected institution could result in their interests being ignored. Politicians in majority-Anglo school districts may be oblivious to the services provided to and the performance of minority students. Politicians are not always alone in such neglect. In his enumeration of bureaupathologies, Caiden (1991) includes "social astigmatism" or the failure to identify problems. If minority student performance is not a salient issue to political elites or administrators, such failure is likely to go unnoticed (i.e. social astigmatism), providing that it does not interfere with salient outputs.

Thus, areas of bureaucratic failure that are deemed unimportant to the general public are likely to be ignored by both politicians and administrators. Indeed, O'Toole and Meier (2004) have provided empirical evidence that public managers disproportionately focus on majoritarian concerns often at the expense of minority group interests. In a study of the role of managerial networking in Texas school districts, O'Toole and Meier found that managers with high networking skills improve

performance for Anglo students and college-oriented students, and actually negatively affect minority and poor students' performance. They argue this is because external managerial networking disproportionately involves contact with actors who are interested in improving performance indicators that are relevant for already advantaged students, such as ACT and SAT scores. This, in turn, comes at the expense of focusing on the performance of disadvantaged groups such as black, Latino, and low-income students.

Salience, then, is a relative concept. What is salient to one group may not be salient to another. Furthermore, the level of salience for a particular output may change even within the same group of individuals. Indeed, this is seen frequently as the important issues of the day continually shift (e.g., public opinion toward undocumented immigrants, affirmative action, or gun control). Such shifts in the level of salience for a particular policy can occur for different reasons. One explanation is crisis. Significant policy failure may result in a public outcry, resulting in increased attention and ultimately salience. Indeed, following Hurricane Katrina and Rita, the effectiveness of federal disaster responsiveness became one of the most important issues on the political landscape. The media often plays a significant role in either initiating or increasing public awareness or exposure to the crisis.[32] In the case of Katrina, numerous stories relayed by multiple media outlets demonstrated the lack of preparation for the disaster on the part of FEMA and local government officials. Similarly, the devastating events

[32] Past research has found a link between media coverage and public's opinion about salience of various policy issues (e.g. Page, Shapiro, and Dempsey 1987; Iyengar and Kinder 1987; Kellstedt 2003).

of September 11, 2001 changed the publics' level of salience toward airport security and perhaps national security in general. Hence, crisis resulting for bureaucratic failure is one means of altering political salience toward an issue and, thus, political responsiveness toward that issue.

A second way political salience can be altered is through a shift in the preferences of the political institution. Indeed, the composition of a political institution largely dictates its preferences and priorities. This can be seen at the national level as the composition of political institutions shift from Republican to Democrat, so do the priorities. Environmental protection, for example, is typically given more credence as a policy by a Democrat controlled Congress or presidency than a Republican one. This suggests that the salience, and hence political responsiveness, to a policy output is contingent, in part, on the composition of the political institution. With respect to education policy, as suggested above, the outputs that are considered salient will largely depend on what the community defines as salient and what members of the elected school board consider important.

This chapter is interested in examining political responsiveness to policy outputs that may not be considered universally salient. In particular, it examines political responsiveness to failure related to Latino student performance. Chapter III found that past Latino student performance on the TAKS exam is not related to the likelihood of political involvement in public administration. Arguably, this is because Latino student performance is not a salient issue to most Texas school districts. Hence, elected officials

as well as school administrators are less likely to take notice of deficiencies in Latino student performance (i.e. social astigmatism) unless these deficiencies significantly affect overall performance. This chapter examines the how political representation can moderate perceptions of salience, resulting in political responsiveness.

More than 46 percent of the 4.5 million students enrolled in Texas public schools are Latino – nearly 10 percent higher than ten years earlier.[33] However, less than 36 percent of 2007 high school graduates were Latino. Alternatively, over 47 percent of these graduates were Anglo (who make up 35.7 percent of total students). Despite recent gains, Latino students continue to lag behind Anglo students on a number of performance indicators. The average Latino pass rate on the TAKS exam is 62 percent compared to 82 percent for Anglo students. Similarly, the statewide average 4-year dropout rate for Latinos is 13.1 compared to 3.9 for Anglos. The percent of Latino students who score above 1110 on the SAT (or its equivalent on the ACT) is nearly 28 points lower than for Anglos (11.4 percent compared to 38.2 percent), and the percent of Anglo students who are classified as "College Ready" is more than double the Latino figure (48 percent versus 21 percent).

These discrepancies in elementary and secondary education have implications for future opportunities in higher education. While Hispanics make up over 35 percent of the state's population, only about 25 percent of those enrolled in higher education

[33] As of 2007, Hispanic students made up 46.3 percent of the 4,576,933 students enrolled in public school districts. In 1997, 1,432,546 Hispanic students were enrolled in public schools (37.4% of total students). Source: Texas Education Agency, Academic Excellence Indicator System, 2007 and 1997 State Performance Reports.

institutions are Hispanic and Hispanics account for only about 21 percent of college degree recipients.[34] The Latino population in Texas and nationally is growing rapidly; indeed, from 2000 to 2006 the Latino population increased by 24 percent and the Census projects that by 2050, Hispanics will make up nearly 25 percent of the U.S. population (U.S. Census, 2006). Hence, scholarly research on Latinos – as the nation's largest ethnic minority group – is becoming increasingly necessary and valuable.

While Latino students are a plurality of students enrolled in Texas public schools, the question remains whether Latinos have gained enough political clout to influence the behavior of political actors. That is, in the context of this research project, are political actors responsive to Latino student performance? As Chapter III as well as past research suggests, political actors respond to politically salient policy outputs; thus, what conditions are needed for political responsiveness to occur when the policy outcome is not universally salient? This chapter presents an interactive model that considers the role political representation plays in shaping policy salience, and thus political responsiveness.

**Political Representation**

Conceptually, there are several ways to define representation. One view of representation considers the representative a delegate for those particular voters who elected him or her, and the legislator ought to represent the interests of this constituency. Under this form of representation – called dyadic representation – each legislator has one

[34] Source: 2006 data from the Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences.

constituency (Weissberg 1978). Another type of dyadic representation is when a legislator acts in such a way as to benefit his or her district as a whole rather than solely those citizens who voted for him or her. Again, this presents a situation where there is one constituency.

Coming out of this is Hanna Pitkin's (1967) distinction between descriptive and substantive representation. Descriptive representation is where the political official is "standing for" the represented, where substantive representation is where he or she is "acting for" the represented. Pitkin argues if elected officials substantively represent the interests of the people rather than their own interests, then the people are empowered and a democratic aspect to the republic is satisfied. There has been considerable empirical research examining both descriptive and substantive representation that has attempted to answer the question of whether descriptive representation (e.g. race, ethnicity, gender, social class) translates into substantive representation. The literature on minority representation has approached these questions in several different ways. One approach has examined the congruence between the policy preferences of minority legislators and minority citizens. Much of this literature has found that elected minority legislators do share many of the same values and policy preferences as their minority constituents (e.g. Tate 2004).

Non-constituents can still be represented under this framework, however, through virtual representation, which takes place when there are common interests and attitudes between the political actor and a group of people, even though those people did not

choose the political actor. Virtual representation might be found among business or environmental groups and legislators who have congruent interests. Indeed, this form of representation may be superior to actual representation (legislators acting in the interests of their electors) because virtual representation is based on shared attitudes, whereas there may not be shared sentiment under actual representation (see Pitkin's (1967) discussion of Edmund Burke, 175). Thus, under virtual representation, individuals who are not actually represented through their vote may be represented by a legislator who shares their values and acts in a manner that advances their interests.

A second set of research has examined the success to which minority legislators are able to adopt legislation and policies that benefit their minority constituents. Karnig and Welch (1980), examine the determinants of the successful elections of black mayors and city councilpersons. They also examine the influence black mayors have on city budgets, finding some evidence that black representation is associated with differences in budgetary policy (also see Bratton and Haynie 1999). The most common approach, however, examines the relationship between minority representation in elected institutions and policy outcomes for minority constituents. Descriptive representation has been linked to increases in minority administrative positions in municipal governments (Dye and Renick 1981; Kerr and Mladenka 1994) as well as within school districts (Polinard, Wrinkle and Longoria 1990; Wright, Hirlinger and England 1998). Furthermore, policy outcomes for minority groups have been found to improve as a result of descriptive representation. With respect to K-12 education policy, Latino representation on the school boards is associated with improvements in Latino student

performance (Fraga, Meier and England 1986; Meier and Stewart 1991). There is a consensus in this literature suggesting that descriptive representation is indeed associated with substantive representation and positive outcomes for the groups who are descriptively represented (Karnig and Welch 1980; Eisinger 1982; Meier and Stewart 1991; Gay 2001; Tate 2003; but see Swain 1993; Robinson 2002).

Therefore, a great deal of empirical literature suggests that race and ethnicity are appropriate proxies for incentives and motivations of elected officials. That is, Latino representatives are more likely to advance the interests of Latino constituents than are Anglo representatives. This could be because Latino representatives gain their primary electoral support from Latino voters. Alternatively, Latino representatives may push for Latino interests because of shared values and preferences, as the representation literature suggests. Regardless of the origin of motivation, the literature recognizes race and ethnicity as robust indicators of policy preferences.

**Representation and Political Responsiveness**

With the concept of descriptive representation in mind, this chapter proceeds by replicating the findings from Chapter III, focusing, however, on Latino student performance. We saw in Chapter III that – unlike with overall performance – school boards were not more likely to engage in contact with superintendents in response to poor Latino student performance. This result was theoretically expected since Latino student outcomes are not universally salient, and we only expect political actors to respond to politically salient issues. However, if the values of the political institution

change, the issue salience should change, ergo, politicians will respond to different stimuli. The expectation, then, is that the more the interests of Latinos are represented on the school board via descriptive representation, the more likely it will be that school boards respond to Latino student failure. This implies an interactive relationship between past failure and Latino representation, where past Latino failure will not elicit a political response unless there is Latino descriptive representation on the school board.

The second step is to examine whether increased descriptive representation is associated with improvements in Latino student performance (i.e. substantive representation).[35] Chapter III provided evidence that political responsiveness is associated with improvements in future performance. This chapter replicates this analysis for Latino student, adding the concept of representation. The addition of this concept complicates the story somewhat. In Chapter III, the effects of contact were conditional on the presence of past failure, where unwarranted contact actually had a negative effect on future performance. In the case of Latino student performance, the effects of contact should be moderated by both past failure *and* descriptive representation. This implies a three-way interaction between past failure, contact, and Latino representation.

The literature on representation has generally found a positive relationship between descriptive representation and outcomes for minority groups. However, under

[35] Arguably, political intervention alone – even if unsuccessful in producing changes – could be considered a form of substantive representation. The act of responding to failure indicates the representative is acting for, rather than just standing for, his or her constituents. The lack of political responsiveness could indicate cases where descriptive representation has not translated into substantive representation.

this framework the effect of descriptive representation on outcomes is conditioned by political responsiveness. That is, descriptive representation is expected to improve performance, but only if some action is taken on the part of the representatives. Indeed, it is unlikely that Latino school board members who do not engage administrators of an under-performing district will be able to influence policy outcomes for Latino students. Thus, this research takes the question of descriptive representation one step further by accounting for the *actions* of representatives. Indeed, faith (or in this case values) without works, is dead.

From this, we can derive some conditional hypotheses.

$H_{1a}$: *The likelihood of political intervention occurring will* not *increase as Latino student failure increases if Latino representation is* not *present.*

$H_{1b}$: *The likelihood of political intervention occurring will increase as Latino student failure increases* if Latino representation is present.

The first hypothesis posits that bureaucratic failure specific to Latino students is unlikely to lead to political intervention if there is no Latino descriptive representation on the school board. Its corollary ($H_{1b}$) is that political responsiveness to poor Latino student performance is likely to occur if at least some members of the school board are themselves Latino. Research suggests that, compared to their non-Latino counterparts, Latino elected officials are more likely to have values, experiences and preferences that reflect the values and preferences of Latino constituents. Therefore, Latino school board members are more inclined to be concerned with the performance of Latino students and

consider it a salient issue, which makes them more likely to identify problems specific to Latinos and, in turn, take steps to remedy such problems. Anglo school board members, alternatively, are less likely to be concerned specifically with Latino performance, and may simply look at overall measures of performance that they consider salient. Thus, Latino-specific outcomes are expected to be more salient to Latino representatives than non-Latino representatives, thus increasing the likelihood that they will respond when failure occurs in Latino-specific outputs or outcomes.

**Figure 4.1.**
**A Model of Race, Salience and Political Responsiveness**

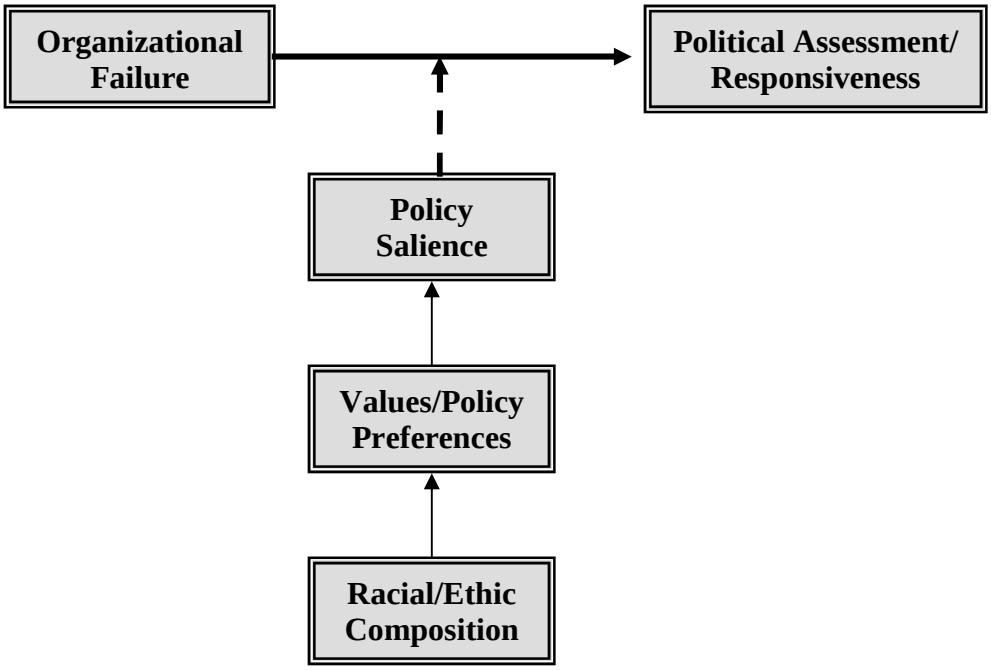



Figure 4.1 visually presents this rationale. Race and ethnicity are strongly linked to values and policy preferences – especially regarding policies that are related to race

and/or ethnicity. These preferences, then, shape what is deemed salient, which, in turn, influences which policies will be monitored and, in the case of failure, responded to.

With respect to how representation and political involvement influence future performance, the logic articulated above suggests the following hypotheses.

$H_2$: *Political contact will be associated with improvements in Latino student performance if past failure* and *Latino representation are present.*

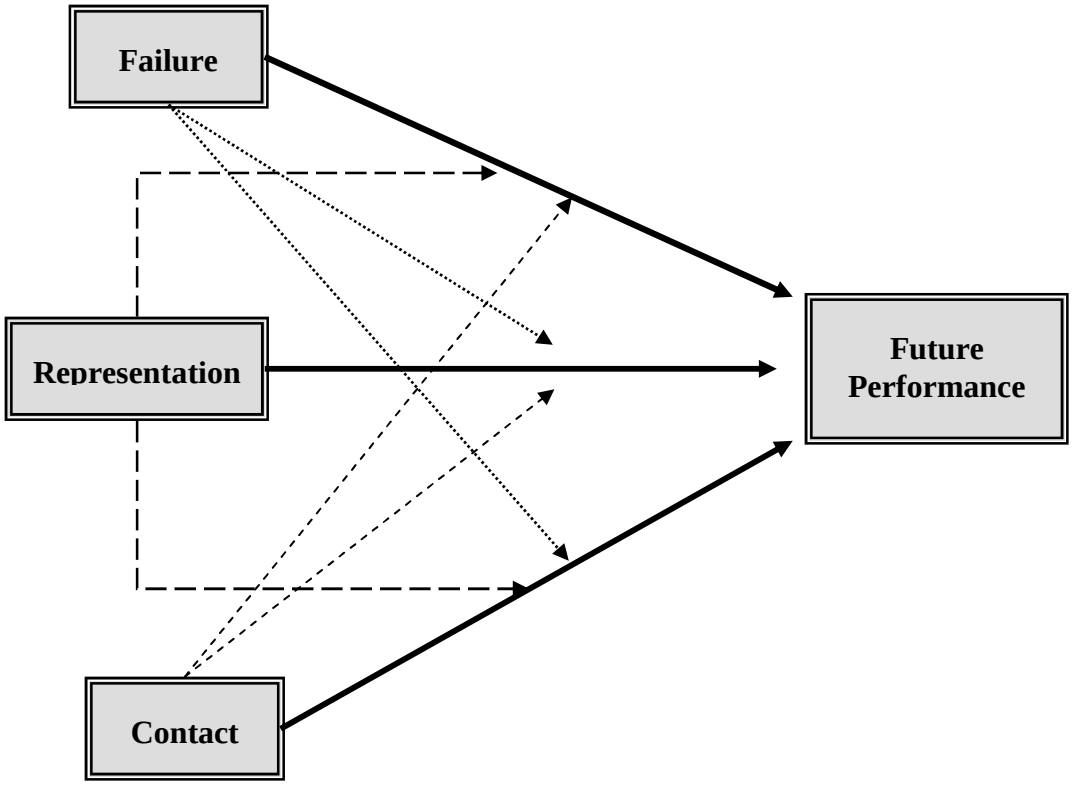
Hypothesis 2 posits that – as was the case of salient outputs in Chapter III – political intervention, as a response to past failure, will result in improvements in Latino student performance; however, this result is conditional on the presence of Latino representation on the school board. Political contact in and of itself is not expected to lead to improvements and may be nothing more than political meddling. However, if past failure exists and Latinos are represented on the school board, the content of political interactions with administrators is more likely to include discussions about the Latino-related failure than it would be if Latino representation were absent. Therefore, the expectation is that political contact will result in improvements under this scenario.

The effect of representation on future performance, alternatively, is also conditional in nature. While much of the research consistently finds a positive relationship between descriptive representation of minority groups and policy outcomes for those minority groups, one would not expect this to be the case if the representatives were not responsive to bureaucratic outputs for those groups to begin with. That is, if

elected officials were themselves unaware of failure specific to the group they ostensibly represent, or if they simply did not respond to such failure, we would not expect that their presence alone would result in an improved outcome for that group. Again, for substantive representation to occur, representative must *act* for the group they represent. Hypothesis 4 summarizes this logic.

> $H_3$: *Latino representation will be associated with improvements in Latino student performance if past failure and political contact are present.*

**Figure 4.2.**
**An Interactive Model of the Determinants of Organizational Performance**



This interactive relationship, then, entails a three-way interaction between failure, contact and representation, where the effect of any one of these variables will depend on the value of the others. This concept is depicted graphically in Figure 4.2. That is, the relationship between representation and performance of Latino students is going to depend on past performance and whether Latino representatives engaged in contact with district administration. Alternatively, the effect of past Latino student failure on future performance will depend on whether Latino interests are represented on the school board and whether political actors engaged administrators.

**Data and Methods**

To test these hypotheses, the data and measures used in Chapter III are employed. In addition to these measures, several others are added. Specifically, measures of Latino-specific failure, Latino performance improvements and Latino descriptive representation are needed. Texas school districts are especially useful in examining issues related to Latino students since, unlike many other states, there is tremendous variation on Latino student indicators. In 2005, the average district in Texas was comprised of 31 percent Latino students, and this percentage ranged from zero to 100. In the average Texas district, 54 percent of Latino students pass all components of the TAKS exam; furthermore, the Latino TAKS pass rate ranges from 9 percent to 97 percent. These data, then, provide us with substantial variation.

*Latino-Specific Bureaucratic Failure*

Latino representatives, conceptually, should be more likely to recognize and respond to Latino-specific failure. Thus, a measure is needed that captures the performance of Latino students. Since districts vary considerably in terms of what they regard as acceptable performance, an absolute measure of Latino performance is problematic. For example, a Latino TAKS pass rate of 75 may be acceptable to a district if the non-Latino pass rate is also in that range, while it would be considered a failure in a district where the non-Latino pass rate was 95. Therefore, a relative measure of performance should provide a better measure of failure. To create a relative measure of Latino student performance, the *performance gap* on the TAKS exam between Anglo and Latino students is used. More formally, it is $TAKS_A$ - $TAKS_L$. This provides the differential in performance between Latinos and Anglos, where higher values represent higher levels of bureaucratic failure with respect to Latino performance (i.e. Anglos perform significantly above Latinos). Recognizing the vast differences in district performance, Anglo pass rates, then, act as a baseline for the expected performance of the district. Latino school board members are expected to be more likely to take notice of Latino student performance, and assess whether it is where it should be (i.e. comparable to Anglo pass rates). Discrepancies in the performance of Latino students relative to Anglo students should result in increased political involvement with school district administration if Latino representation is present on the school board ($H_1$).

*Political Representation*

With the exception of one school district, the Texas educational system uses independent school districts with elected school boards that are charged with responsibility for each public school district. These school districts are independent in the sense that they are independently elected and possess authority to run their respective districts independent from city, county or state governments. While there are state reporting and testing requirements, school boards make decisions with respect to tax rates, educational curricula, hiring the chief administrative officer, among other responsibilities. The majority (92%) of school boards in Texas consist of seven members, but size of the board can range from 3 to 19. In all, there are over 7,000 school board members serving on Texas school boards.[36]

To measure political representation, data from the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO) is used. This organization produces a directory of all Latino elected officials in the United States at national, state and local levels, including the number of Latinos who have been elected to school boards. Using these data, along with TEA data on the total number of members each district has, a measure of the percentage of school board members who are Latino was created. There is a considerable variation in Latino school board representation in Texas school districts. Of the 7,000+ school board members, nearly 10 percent (695) are Latino. While the number of Latinos on school boards ranges from zero to 11, most school boards (80%) have no Latino board

[36] Based on author's calculations using 2005 school board data. Of the 1035 public districts in 2005, there were a total of 7178 school board members, 695 of whom were Latino.

members at all. This lack of representation even occurs, albeit at a lower rate, in school districts that are majority Latino students. Indeed, 35 percent of districts with at least 50 percent Latino student had no Latino members on their school board. On average, Latino descriptive representation on the school board is 20 percentage points lower than the percentage of Latino students enrolled in the school district.

*The Effect of Latino Performance on Political Responsiveness*

The first step in replicating the results from Chapter III for Latinos is to model the frequency of political-administrative contact as a function of past bureaucratic failure. Political contact is measured as it was in Chapter III; that is, it is a five-point scale of the frequency of contact between school board members and the superintendent ranging from annual to daily contact. Past failure, in this case, is the Anglo-Latino gap in TAKS pass rates; thus, higher levels of past failure are expected to be associated with interactions that are more frequent. This relationship, however, is expected to be conditional on descriptive representation; therefore, Latino school board representation is also included in the model and is interacted with past failure. Formally, this can be stated as:

$$C = \beta_1 R + \beta_2 F + \beta_3 RF + \beta_4 M + \beta_5 O + \varepsilon \qquad \textbf{[4.1]}$$

where C is the level of political Contact,

*R* is the level of Latino Representation on the school board,

*F* is past Failure (i.e. Anglo-Latino gap),

*RF* is a multiplicative term between Failure and Representation,

*M* is a vector of Managerial factors,

*O* is a vector of Organizational characteristics,

and ε is a random error term.

The same managerial variables that were used in the first model in Chapter III are used in this model; namely, managerial experience in the district and managerial networking. Similarly, this model controls for the same organizational characteristics as were controlled for in Chapter III. These include teacher turnover, student-teacher ratio, percent of non-certified teachers, average teacher experience, average teacher salary (in $1,000), total revenue per pupil, logged state aid, and total enrollment (in 1,000s). Since this model is explicitly interested in minority student populations (Latino students), I control for the percent of enrolled students who are Latino and African-American, respectively.

In testing the first hypothesis, several other factors are taken into consideration. The measure of past failure is measured as Latino performance relative to Anglo performance, which implies that school board members will compare Latino performance to some baseline, presumably Anglo performance. This requires, then, that there are such groups so that a comparison can be made. Superintendents in districts with no Latino students obviously cannot respond to their failure. Alternatively, in districts with all Latino students, there is no comparison group to assess student performance. Rather, performance is likely assessed based on the performance of other districts, as was argued to be the case in Chapter III. Therefore, in examining

responsiveness to Latino performance, only districts with Latino student percentages within the 5th and 95th percentiles (2 percent and 92 percent, respectively) were included. Similarly, only districts with at least 5 percent (5th percentile) Anglo students were included to ensure an adequate comparison group. Additionally, only districts with at least 10 Latino students and at least 250 total students were included. This was done because, in dealing with percentages, extreme and unrepresentative values are more likely in smaller districts. In the final sample of districts for this model, the average district had 27 percent Latino students (ranging from 11 to nearly 99,000 Latino students), 62 percent Anglo students (ranging from 49 to over 38,000 students), and an average enrollment of 4781 students (median = 1443).

The final consideration in selecting the cases for the first model is the level of past failure. Theoretically, if the gap between Anglo and Latino students were excessively large, political responsiveness would be expected regardless of the level of representation. This could occur for at least two reasons. First, an exceedingly large performance gap is likely to garner attention from citizens, researchers or local media, resulting in a crisis or political fiasco. Such fiascoes are one sure way to capture the attention of politicians. The second reason political responsiveness would be more likely under massive failure of Latinos is that extremely poor performance of Latinos, relative to Anglos, will decrease the district's *overall* performance – a policy output that school board members do pay close attention to. Thus, cases where the past Anglo-

Latino TAKS pass rate gap was greater than the 95th percentile (27) were excluded.[37] Table 4.1 presents summary statistics for all the variables in the model.

**Table 4.1. Summary Statistics for Model 1**

| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Political Contact | 4.29 | 0.88 | 2 | 6 |
| Latino Representation | 5.80 | 13.34 | 0 | 100 |
| Lagged Anglo-Latino TAKS Gap | 11.89 | 8.19 | -27.4 | 26.9 |
| Managerial Networking | 0.01 | 0.98 | -2.71 | 2.78 |
| Superintendent's Experience in District | 9.57 | 9.72 | 0 | 44 |
| Teacher Turnover | 16.66 | 6.50 | 0.8 | 44.3 |
| Average Teacher Experience | 12.35 | 1.98 | 2.6 | 18.3 |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | 4.54 | 4.36 | 0 | 32.1 |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 13.24 | 1.96 | 4.80 | 30.47 |
| Average Teacher Salary (in $1000s) | 37.10 | 2.68 | 29.80 | 49.02 |
| Logged State Aid | 10.54 | 3.83 | 5.48 | 19.38 |
| Revenue Per Pupil (in $1000s) | 7587.11 | 1628.12 | 4723 | 18656 |
| % Black Students | 9.21 | 11.52 | 0 | 68.6 |
| % Latino Students | 27.43 | 21.51 | 2.3 | 91 |
| % Low Income Students | 45.78 | 16.46 | 1.1 | 89.4 |
| District Size (in 1000s) | 4.78 | 11.66 | 0.25 | 163.56 |

Ordered logistic regression analysis is used to test Hypothesis 1. Table 4.2 presents the results from this analysis. Latino representation is negatively related to the frequency of political contact when there is parity in Anglo and Latino student performance (i.e. failure = 0). More interesting, however, is that past Latino failure is

[37] It should be noted that the results of the models do vary somewhat depending on the selection of cases. The general pattern holds, however, for nearly all specifications of the level of past failure (including no restriction at all), albeit the relationships are not equally strong in all scenarios.

not related to the frequency of contact at all when there is no Latino representation on the school board ($\hat{\beta} = -.008$). That is, political responsiveness to bureaucratic failure pertaining to Latino students is absent if the interests of Latino students are not represented on the school board via descriptive representation. This finding supports Hypothesis 1b, which posits Latino failure would not increase the likelihood of contact if descriptive representation on the school board was not present. These results are conditional, however, as indicated by the interactive term. Thus, the effect of representation – while negative and statistically significant when failure is absent – may be different at other levels of failure.

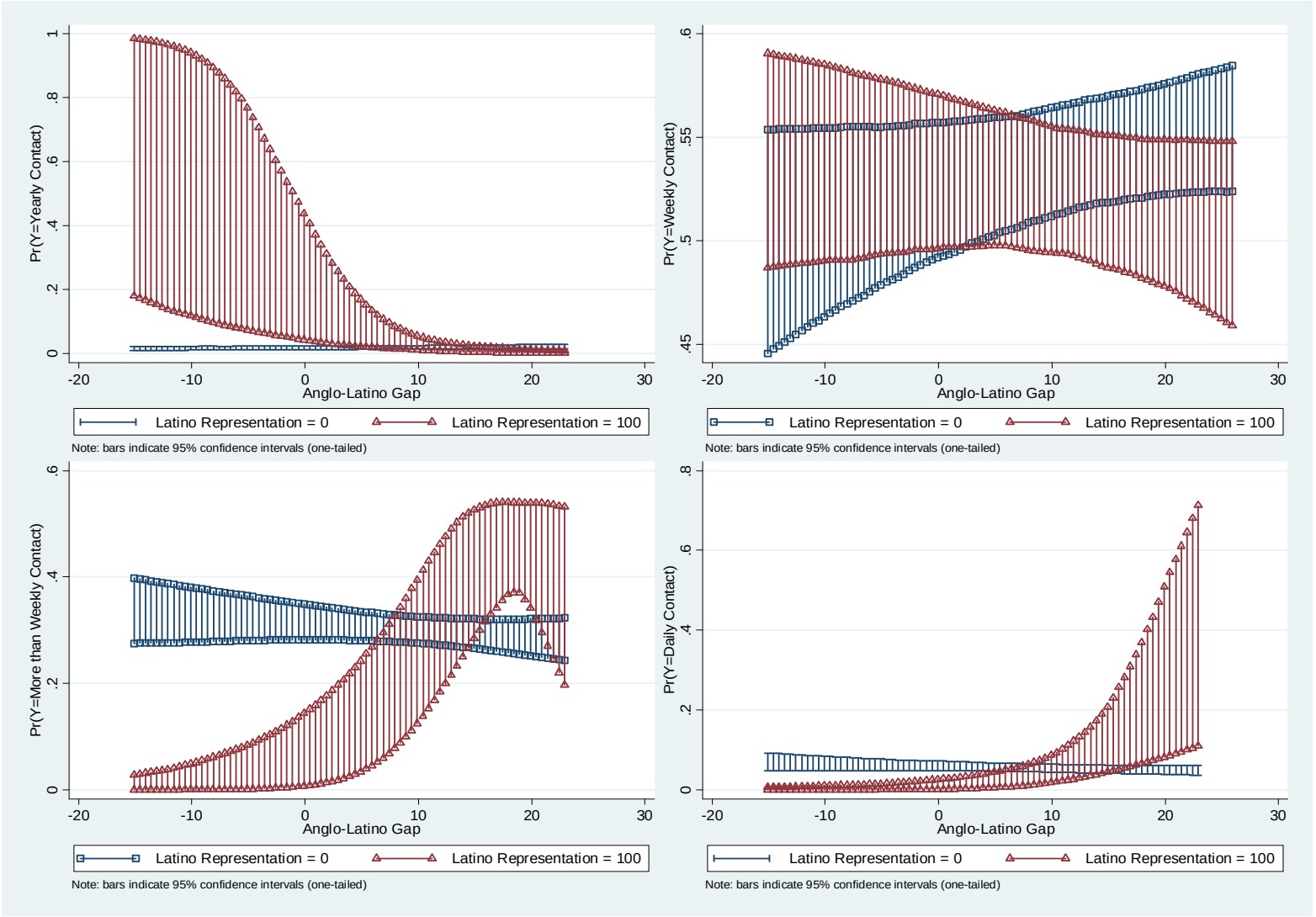
To examine the conditional effects of both representation and past failure on the likelihood of contact, conditional slopes and standard errors can be obtained for each variable. Using the Clarify package in Stata, 1,000 simulations were used to estimate the probability of observing each level of contact. Rather than having only one estimate for each β, these simulations provide 1,000 estimates of each β from the model, which provides a measure of level of uncertainty around each of the parameter estimates. This allows us to include estimates of uncertainty in our calculations of the predicted probabilities for various levels of the dependent variable. Figure 4.3 presents four plots depicting the predicted probabilities of school board members having annual, weekly, more than monthly, and daily contact with the superintendents.

**Table 4.2. Political Contact, Latino Representation and Latino Failure**

| | **Political Contact** |
|---|---|
| *Latino Representation* | *-0.034* |
| | *(0.012)*** |
| *Lagged Anglo-Latino TAKS Gap* | *-0.008* |
| | *(0.008)* |
| *Representation × Anglo-Latino Gap* | *0.002* |
| | *(0.001)*** |
| Managerial Networking | 0.975 |
| | (0.067)** |
| Superintendent's Experience in District | -0.017 |
| | (0.006)** |
| Teacher Turnover | -0.006 |
| | (0.010) |
| Average Teacher Experience | -0.016 |
| | (0.036) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | 0.005 |
| | (0.014) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.101 |
| | (0.045)* |
| Average Teacher Salary (in $1000s) | -0.020 |
| | (0.033) |
| Logged State Aid | 0.026 |
| | (0.019) |
| Revenue Per Pupil (in $1000s) | 0.016 |
| | (0.053) |
| % Black Students | 0.014 |
| | (0.006)* |
| % Latino Students | 0.014 |
| | (0.005)** |
| % Low Income Students | -0.024 |
| | (0.006)** |
| District Size (in 1000s) | 0.011 |
| | (0.006) |
| Observations | 1242 |
| Pseudo $R^2$ | .11 |
| $\chi^2_{(16)}$ | 350.17 |
| Cut 1 -4.06 (1.16) | |
| Cut 1 -2.23 (1.15) | |
| Cut 1 0.54 (1.14) | |
| Cut 1 2.84 (1.15) | |

Order Logistic Regression. (Standard errors in parentheses) * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

**Figure 4.3. Predicted Probabilities of Contact Conditional on Past Latino Failure by Level of Representation**



The first plot in this figure presents the predicted probabilities (with confidence intervals) of yearly contact – the lowest observed value – for varying levels of past bureaucratic failure with respect to Latino performance. This plot presents the predicted probabilities for both high (100 percent) and low (0 percent) levels of Latino representation on the school board. As can be seen, the predicted probability of annual contact is quite high when representation is high *and* Latino student performance is high relative to Anglo performance. This represents the expected likelihood of annual contact if Latinos are well represented and Latino students are performing significantly above Anglo students. The predicted probabilities drastically decline, however, as the Anglo-Latino performance gap grows to where the likelihood of annual contact in the average district (Anglo-Latino gap = 12) with full descriptive representation is virtually zero. What is interesting is that the predicted probabilities are static when descriptive representation is absent. This implies that the behavior of school boards without Latino members is non-responsive to relative Latino performance in that, regardless of whether Latinos are under- or over-performing, the likelihood of annual contact does not change.

The plot in the upper right hand corner presents the predicted probabilities for weekly contact – the modal category for this variable. Here we see that the probabilities are trending in opposite directions, although the differences in the probabilities are not statistically significant from one another. The trend, however, is in the direction we would expect; that is, as Latino performance falters, the likelihood of weekly contact

declines if representation is present.[38] More interesting, however, is the plot in the lower left-hand side of Figure 4.3. This plots the probabilities of observing political-administrative interaction occurring more than once a week. When representation is 100 percent, there is a low probability of more than weekly contact if Latino students are performing well compared to their Anglo counterparts. Yet, when Anglos students significantly out-perform Latinos (i.e. Latino-specific bureaucratic failure), the probability of more than weekly contact significantly increases to the point that, under high levels of failure, more than weekly contact is an expected outcome.[39] Additionally, the differences in predicted probabilities across this range of values of failure are statistically different from one another (i.e. the confidence intervals do not overlap). Thus, the predicted probability when the performance gap is -10 and representation is 100 is statistically different from when the gap is, say, +10.

This is not the cases when descriptive representation is zero. The likelihood of observing this higher level of contact does not change significantly in response to past failure. That is, there is no statistical difference between the likelihood of weekly-plus contact when the Anglo-Latino performance gap is -10 and +10, or -10 and +25. This suggests that school boards are unresponsive to Latino performance if Latino interests are not represented descriptively on the school board. This is exactly what Hypothesis 1 predicts.

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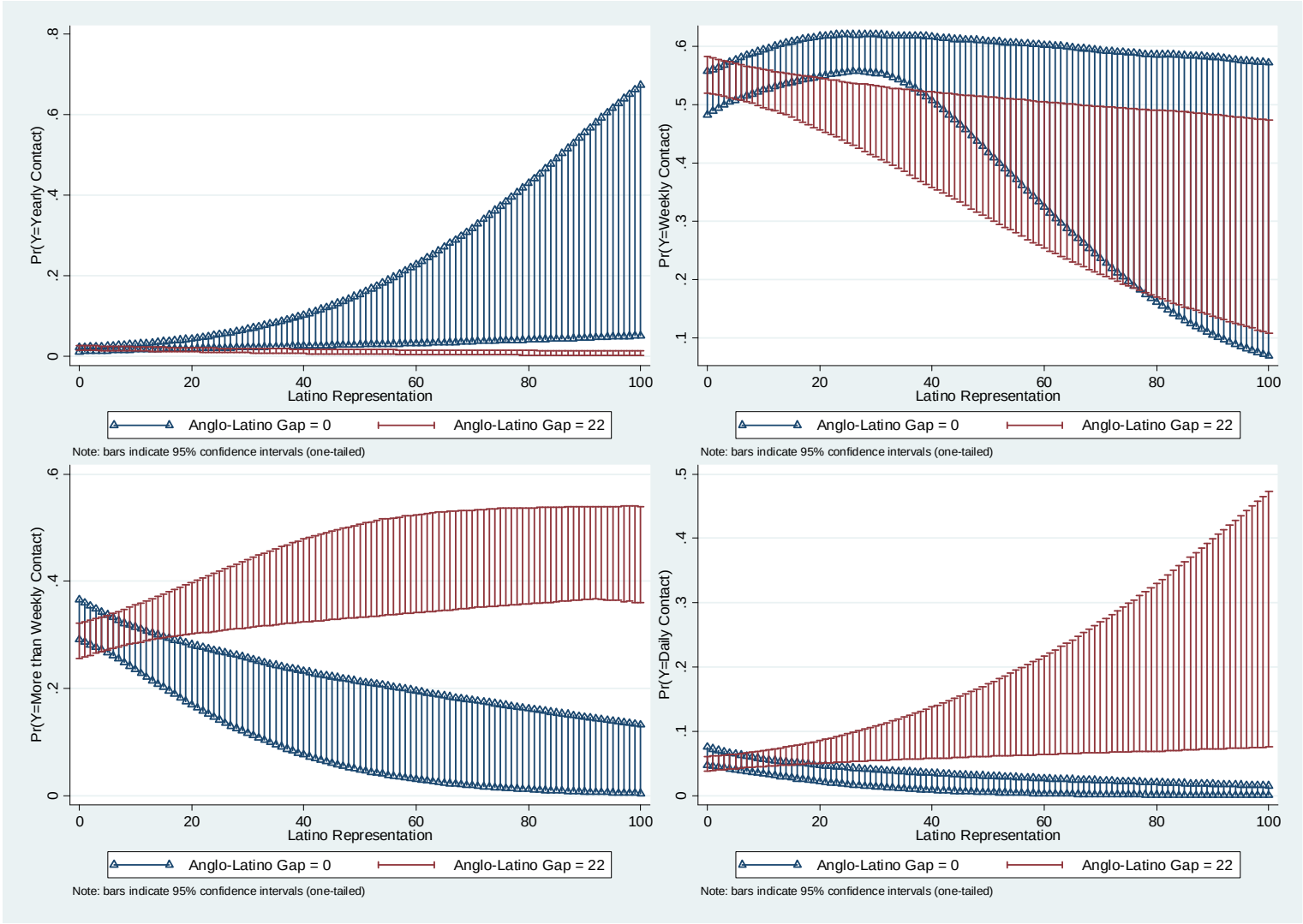
[38] A decline is expected under representation since weekly contact is the norm, rather than a high level of contact, which we would expect under high levels of representation.

[39] That is, a probability of .5 is within the 95% interval once failure is greater than about 14.

The final plot in Figure 4.3 presents the predicted probabilities of observing daily contact between the school board and superintendents – a fairly uncommon phenomenon (about 8 percent of observations). Here we see the same pattern as we did with the other level of high contact. That is, the likelihood of daily contact is low – virtually zero – unless past failure is high, in which case it increases significantly and is statistically different from the predicted probabilities at lower levels of failure. This is only the case when representation is high. When representation is absent, political institutions appear to be completely unresponsive to Latino student performance.

We can also examine this conditional relationship between representation and bureaucratic performance by estimating the predicted probabilities of contact across the full range of representation for different levels of past failure. Figure 4.4 presents four graphs that capture these effects. The y-axis depicts the predicted probabilities while the x-axis is the level of Latino representation on the school board. The graphs present two scenarios of past failure: one where Anglo and Latino pass rates are the same (gap = 0) and one where the gap is one standard deviation above the mean (22). The first graph presents the probabilities of observing annual contact and suggests that the presence of past failure produces distinctly different expectations even at higher levels of representation. When representation is low, the likelihood of annual contact is essentially zero regardless of the level of failure. However, at higher levels of representation, we begin to see a difference. In districts where Latinos were underperforming, the likelihood of annual contact remains essentially zero. Alternatively, the likelihood of rare contact was considerably higher in cases where

**Figure 4.4. Predicted Probabilities of Political Contact Conditional on Representation by Level of Latino Failure**



Latinos were performing well and representation was high. This suggests that politicians may be more likely to employ a hands-off approach in cases where bureaucratic agencies are producing satisfactory policy outputs and outcomes.

The likelihood of weekly contact – the most common frequency of contact – tends to decline as the percent of Latino representation on the school board increases, especially in cases where past failure was high. These differences, however, are not statistically significant. Yet for more than weekly contact (bottom left-hand corner), we do see a striking difference in the predicted probabilities between different levels of failure and representation. When the school board had few or no Latino members, the level of failure does not appear to matter; that is, the predicted probability is about 30 percent regardless of whether Latino performance was high or low. Yet, once Latino representation reaches about 18 percent, the differences in the predicted probabilities are statistically significant. The likelihood of more than weekly contact drastically declines as Latino representation increases, but only in cases where Latino students are performing as well as their Anglo counterparts. In cases where Latinos perform significantly below Anglos, the likelihood of contact significantly increases as representation increases.

The final plot in Figure 4.4 presents the predicted probabilities for daily contact, and, as can be seen, the pattern is similar to that of more than weekly contact. At low levels of representation, the level of Latino failure does not matter; that is, the behavior of school boards is the same regardless of whether Latinos are doing poorly or doing

well. However, as the level of representation increases, the behavior of the school board depends on the performance of Latino students. If Latino students are doing well, the likelihood of daily contact is essentially zero; however, if Latino students are significantly under-performing compared to Anglos, the likelihood of contact increases. What is interesting in all of these scenarios is that when Latino representation is absent, the behavior of school boards is the same, regardless of Latino performance. It is only when Latino students are descriptively represented that past Latino performance/failure matters in influencing the likelihood of increased levels of contact. This evidence provides support for Hypothesis 1. This, then, comports with our theoretical expectation and suggests that political assessment occurs, but only for policy areas that are considered salient by elected officials. The likelihood that Latino-specific outputs would be deemed sufficiently salient to warrant attention increases as the number of elected officials who are Latino increases, thus increasing the probability of a response to the failure.

*The Conditional Effect of Political Contact on Performance*

The second question this chapter addresses is whether Latino representation and political representation make a difference in terms of the future performance of Latino students. Much of the literature on descriptive representation contends that minority groups benefit from descriptive representation in terms of policy outcomes that directly affect minority groups. Theoretically, however, this should only be the case if minority representatives actually take action on behalf of their constituents. Minority legislators

who do not actively pursue policies aimed at bettering their constituents, are unlikely to be associated with positive policy outcomes for the group they ostensibly represent. Thus, in the present case, we should only expect representation to have a positive effect on future performance of failing districts if representatives recognized that failure had occurred and took some action to remedy that failure (i.e. made political contact).

This entails a three-way interactive term between past failure, political representation and political contact, where the expected effects of each are dependent on the presence of the others (see Figure 4.2). As Hypotheses 3 suggests, higher levels of contact are expected to be associated with improvements in performance, if past failure and representation are present. As discussed in Chapter III, contact in and of itself is not necessarily conducive to improvements; however, if the contact is in response to failure, then improvements are expected. Similarly, Hypothesis 4 suggests that the relationship between representation and improvements for Latinos is conditional on both the level of contact and failure. Unnecessary high contact is expected to have a negative effect on performance. Yet if failure is present and nothing is done (i.e. little interaction with superintendent), then we do not expect improvements to occur, regardless of the level of *descriptive* representation since substantive representation (i.e. action) is arguably not occurring.

To test these hypotheses, improvements in the Anglo-Latino performance gap is examined. This measure is created by simply taking the difference of the current Anglo-Latino TAKS pass rate gap from the gap from the previous year; that is, Improvement =

TAKS $Gap_{t-1}$ – TAKS $Gap_t$. This gives us a measure where higher values are associated with greater success at closing the performance gap between Latino and Anglo students. The average improvement in closing the Anglo-Latino performance gap in this sample is 0.22 (std. dev. = 8.8). Thus, the gap between Anglos and Latinos tends to stay about the same from year to year in most districts. Indeed, in about half of the observations, the change in performance does not change more than three points in either direction. The expectation, then, in that under the correct circumstances, Latino representation and contact will be associated with larger gains in closing this performance gaps (i.e. positive values on the dependent variable). Formally, this is modeled as:

$$P = \beta_1 C + \beta_2 R + \beta_3 F + \beta_4 CR + \beta_5 CF + \beta_6 RF + \beta_7 CRF + \beta_8 M + \beta_9 O + \beta_{10} X + \varepsilon \qquad \textbf{[4.2]}$$

where,

*P* is the size of the reduction in the Anglo-Latino gap in TAKS pass rates,

*C* is the amount of political-managerial Contact,

*R* is the level of Latino Representation on the school board,

*F* is past Failure (i.e. Anglo-Latino gap),

*CR* is a multiplicative term between Contact and Representation,

*CF* is a multiplicative term between Contact and Failure,

*RF* is a multiplicative term between Failure and Representation,

*CRF* is a multiplicative term between Contact, Representation and Failure,

*M* is a vector of Managerial variables,

*O* is a vector of Organizational characteristics,

*X* is a vector of Environmental factors (e.g. district demographics),

ε is a random error term and the $\beta$'s are estimatable parameters.

This model essentially replicates the third model in Chapter III, except it examines Latino-specific failure and the role that representation plays in shaping policy outcomes for Latino students. This model is estimated using ordinary least squares regression and the results are presented in Table 4.3.[40] The interpretation of the interactive coefficients is complex since these coefficients are conditional on the values of the other variables. For example, the effect of political contact is positive but not statistically significant when representation is zero and there is parity in Anglo and Latino performance (i.e. gap is 0). Similarly, representation has a positive effect on Latino performance when the performance gap and contact are both zero (a value outside the range of data). To calculate the marginal effects of each constitutive variable we can use the following formulae:

For Contact: $$\frac{\partial P}{\partial C} = \beta_1 + \beta_4 R + \beta_5 F + \beta_7 RF \quad \textbf{[4.3]}$$

For Representation: $$\frac{\partial P}{\partial R} = \beta_2 + \beta_4 C + \beta_6 F + \beta_7 CF \quad \textbf{[4.4]}$$

For Past Failure: $$\frac{\partial P}{\partial F} = \beta_3 + \beta_5 C + \beta_6 R + \beta_7 CR \quad \textbf{[4.5]}$$

[40] It should be noted that this model is not as robust as the other models. While the direction and size of the interaction coefficients do not change significantly, the standard errors do change depending on case selection. The best results appear to occur when the percentage of Latino students is between 10 and 60 percent (presented in Table 4.3). At other specifications (e.g. the specifications used for Model 1) the interactive effects, while still in the same direction, are not statistically significant.

By imputing different values of the constitutive variables, we can obtain the expected marginal effects of each variable under different scenarios. Furthermore, we can also compute the conditional standard error for each variable at different values of the other interactive variables, which allows us to test whether the marginal effects of each variable are statistically significant. The conditional standard error for political contact ($\beta_1$), for example, is computed as:

$$\hat{\sigma}_{\frac{\partial P}{\partial C}} = \sqrt{\begin{array}{l}\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_1) + R^2\,\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_4) + F^2\,\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_5) + R^2F^2\,\text{var}(\hat{\beta}_7) + 2R\,\text{cov}(\beta_1\beta_4) + 2F\,\text{cov}(\beta_1\beta_5) \\ + 2RF\,\text{cov}(\beta_1\beta_7) + 2RF\,\text{cov}(\beta_4\beta_5) + 2RF^2\,\text{cov}(\beta_4\beta_5) + 2FR^2\,\text{cov}(\beta_5\beta_7)\end{array}} \quad \textbf{[4.3]}$$

Using these formulas, the marginal effects and standard errors of all three constitutive variables were calculated for different values of the other variables. Table 4.4 presents the conditional slopes and standard errors for 12 hypothetical situations. The table first presents the marginal effects of political contact on improvements in Latino performance relative to Anglo performance. This is computed using four different states: low representation (0%) and low past failure (Anglo-Latino gap = 0), low representation and high failure (gap = 22), high representation (60%) and low failure, and high representation and high failure. The results suggest that political-administrative contact has no effect of performance when both representation and past failure are low. This represents a situation where there are not electoral incentives (i.e. representation) or need (i.e. past failure) for political contact; thus, such contact is not expected to – and apparently does not – produce benefits. Under high political representation and low failure, political contact also does not have a statistically

**Table 4.3. Effect of Contact, Representation, and Past Failure on Performance**

| | **Dependent Variable = Reduction in Anglo-Latino Gap** |
|---|---|
| *Political Contact ($\beta_1$)* | *0.636* |
| | *(0.552)* |
| *% Latino School Board Representation ($\beta_2$)* | *0.504* |
| | *(0.280)*† |
| *Past Anglo-Latino Gap (Failure) ($\beta_3$)* | *0.868* |
| | *(0.144)*** |
| *Contact × Latino SB Representation ($\beta_4$)* | *-0.091* |
| | *(0.060)* |
| *Contact × Past Failure ($\beta_5$)* | *-0.093* |
| | *(0.033)*** |
| *Latino SB Representation × Past Failure ($\beta_6$)* | *-0.041* |
| | *(0.018)** |
| *Contact × Latino SB Representation × Past Failure ($\beta_7$)* | *0.008* |
| | *(0.004)** |
| Teacher Turnover | -0.067 |
| | (0.038) |
| District Size (1000s) | -0.014 |
| | (0.027) |
| Superintendent's Tenure | 0.022 |
| | (0.028) |
| Managerial Networking | -0.480 |
| | (0.300) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.117 |
| | (0.121) |
| Instructional Expenditures (1000s) | -0.153 |
| | (0.053)** |
| % Black Students | -0.016 |
| | (0.027) |
| % Latino Students | -0.046 |
| | (0.026) |
| % Low Income Students | 0.004 |
| | (0.025) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | -0.138 |
| | (0.125) |
| Average Teacher Experience | -0.162 |
| | (0.144) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.162 |
| | (0.055)** |
| Constant | 10.517 |
| | (5.789) |
| Observations | 950 |
| R-squared | 0.22 |

(Standard errors in parentheses). † significant at 10% * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

significant effect on performance. In agreement with the finding in Chapter III, political contact does not appear to be related to improved organizational performance if the contact is not needed. That is, in both cases where past failure was low (i.e. there was no need for political intervention), contact had no effect on performance regardless of the level of representation.

When past failure is high, however, we see a different pattern. The effect of contact on future performance is negative and statistically significant when representation is absent. In such a case, political interactions with administrators are less likely to pertain to *Latino performance* since Latino interests are not descriptively represented by members of the school board; thus, contact does not improve outcomes for Latinos. Yet, when Latinos are descriptively represented, the effect of contact under high past failure is positive at statistically significant at the .1 level (one-tailed test).[41] This suggests that the relationship between political involvement in administrative affairs and organizational performance is conditional on both the reason for involvement as well as the incentives and preferences of the political institution.

The second set of marginal effects present the effect representation has on performance for different levels of contact and past failure. When past failure is low, representation has a positive and statistically significant effect on future performance if political contact is low. Again, this comports with our expectations where unnecessary

[41] Given the amount of random noise in the contact measure, finding any systematic pattern is unlikely. With more accurate measures, these relationships would likely be stronger.

**Table 4.4 Marginal Effects of Contact, Representation and Failure on Performance**

**Marginal Effects of Contact on Performance**

| | **Past Failure** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Representation** | *Low (0)* | *High (22)* |
| *Low (0)* | 0.64<br>(0.55) | -1.39*<br>(0.47) |
| *High (60)* | -4.80<br>(3.47) | 3.84$^{\Diamond}$<br>(2.49) |

**Marginal Effects of Representation on Performance**

| | **Past Failure** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Contact** | *Low (0)* | *High (22)* |
| *Low (Yearly)* | 0.32*<br>(0.17) | -0.22$^{\dagger}$<br>(0.127) |
| *High (Daily)* | -0.04<br>(0.11) | 0.13$^{\dagger}$<br>(0.068) |

**Marginal Effects of Past Failure on Performance**

| | **Representation** | |
|---|---|---|
| **Contact** | *Low (0)* | *High (60)* |
| *Low (Yearly)* | 0.70*<br>(0.08) | -1.15*<br>(0.56) |
| *High (Daily)* | -0.33*<br>(0.06) | 0.65$^{\dagger}$<br>(0.36) |

Conditional slopes with conditional standard errors in parentheses.
* $p < .05$; $^{\dagger}$ $p < .10$ (two-tailed tests); $^{\Diamond}$ $p < .1$ (one-tailed)

contact is not desirable. In a case where bureaucratic outcomes are satisfactory, lower levels of political involvement yields the better outcome. However, when past performance is poor, the opposite trend emerges. The effects of representation on performance are actually negative in cases where past failure is high and political intervention does not occur. Conversely, representation has a positive effect on Latino performance in the same situation if contact between school board members and administrators is high. These results support Hypothesis 3 and suggest that descriptive representation alone is not enough. Irrespective of their ethnicity, representatives who do not engage in political assessment and take action *when needed* are not associated with substantive representation in terms of positive outcomes for the groups they represent.

The final set of scenarios presented in Table 4.4 examines the effects of past failure on future performance. Theoretically, poor performance in the past is expected to continue or even worsen if no action is taken to remedy bureaupathologies that may cause the failure. Such problems are expected to continue until substantial failure occurs and major reforms are adopted (Caiden 1991). If the appropriate action is taken, however, past failure can be addressed and appropriate steps can be taken to prevent future failure from occurring. When representation is absent, the assumption is that the interactions between school board members and superintendents are not related to Latino performance. Indeed, Model 1 presented evidence suggesting that political actors are completely unresponsive to Latino-specific failure when descriptive representation was not present. Therefore, contact observed in districts with non-Latino representation is

likely related to other, presumably majoritarian (i.e. Anglo) issues. The expected relationship between past failure in such a case is positive when political contact is low and negative when contact is high. While not immediately apparent, this actually fits with our expectations. High levels of political involvement on issues *not related to Latinos* – which is presumably the case when representation is zero – are likely to divert managerial attention to other issues, thus exacerbating the problem. Low levels of contact (when Latino failure would not be the focus) may actually provide managers more time to better assess their organizations performance, which may result in improvements.

High levels of descriptive representation, however, are not inherently expected to result in improved outcomes for minorities. When representation is high, but nothing is done (i.e. low contact), past failure continues to worsen. However, if political actors are responsive to the failure, the relationship between past failure and future performance is positive and statistically significant (at the .1 level). This, too, supports Hypothesis 3 and illustrates the conditional nature of these relationships.

**Conclusion**

In Chapter III, we saw the importance of policy salience in determining whether political responsiveness to failure would occur. Political actors, both theoretically and empirically, respond to issues they consider salient, perhaps at the expense of "non-salient" issues. Unfortunately, in the case of Latinos and African-American student performance failure, political responsiveness appeared to be lacking. This begs the

question, how can a democratically elected institution ensure that it is responsive to the needs of all citizens, especially those who have historically been disenfranchised? In examining this question, the concept of representation – both descriptive and substantive – was introduced and incorporated in the model of political assessment.

The empirical findings from the models tested in this chapter provide tentative support for the hypotheses posited above. Political values and preferences – measured via ethnicity – is a significant predictor of political responsiveness to Latino student performance. Alternatively, when school boards do not represent Latino students, the likelihood of political involvement with administration is strikingly static and immune to the presence or absence of past failure. This suggests that political representation of group-based interests is a vital component to the political assessment process, and would especially be the case in highly diverse communities.

The theoretical and empirical contributions of this chapter inform at least three distinct literatures in the fields of political science and public administration. First, using a governance framework, this work addresses literature on political control. Consistent with past research, it highlights the importance of issue salience in explaining the behavior of political institutions. It goes a step further in examining the nature of conditional salience, particularly the importance of race and ethnicity in shaping preferences and values, which then determines which issues are considered salient. It also contributes to this literature in finding that political involvement in administrative

affairs is not always desirable. Indeed, when political contact is not in response to bureaucratic shortcomings, political intervention appears to be counterproductive.

This research also speaks to research on public management in that it illustrates how management can develop social astigmatism by only focusing on universally salient policies at the expense of disadvantaged groups. Indeed, O'Toole and Meier (2004) found that managerial characteristics that are generally considered assets (e.g., managerial networking) disproportionately benefit students who are already better off rather than those who are most likely to be disadvantaged (minority students, low income). This suggests that managers –even quality ones – may (perhaps unconsciously) wear figurative blinders that focus their sight on a particular set of policy outputs (e.g. overall TAKS), perhaps at the expense of others. What this chapter suggests is that political representation of the interests of these disadvantaged groups can help managers remove their blinders and help draw managerial attention to the plight of these oft forgotten groups.

Finally, this research speaks directly to the literature on political representation, particularly research on descriptive and substantive representation of racial and ethnic minorities. This large literature has found mixed results especially in linking descriptive representation to policy outcomes that benefit the descriptively represented groups. This chapter adds to this literature by – in addition to examining how representation influences policy outcomes – considering the role representation plays in *responding* to the needs of the represented group. This chapter suggests that representation is crucial to

the process of political assessment and to achieving a government that is responsive to the needs of its citizens.

It also contributes to our understanding of representation in providing evidence that descriptive representation alone does not automatically result in substantive representation. Districts that have representation but that are unresponsive are associated with inferior outcomes for Latinos. While representation is linked to higher probabilities that Latino-specific failure will be noticed and responded to, if representatives fail to do so, then representation alone is not linked to positive outcomes in terms of future improvements.

While this chapter provides some insights into the conditional and nuanced nature of political assessment and representation, there are still numerous questions that need to be addressed. Superior data are needed to get a better handle on the activities, motivations, and preferences of public managers and especially elected officials. While these data allow us to examine the frequency of interactions, we really can only assume what these interactions involve and what motivations and objectives drive political-administrative contact. Also due to data limitations, the policy process here is largely treated as a black box where we observe inputs, some management, and outputs. More research is needed on what policies are adopted and – with respect to the importance of representation – what it is that representatives are actually doing in terms of policies to improve the plight of those they represent.

# CHAPTER V

## POLITICAL INFLUENCE AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

In their influential work on political control of the bureaucracy, Dan Wood and Richard Waterman conclude:

> We believe this evidence for active political control is so strong that controversy should now end over *whether* political control occurs…Future research should turn toward exploring the *determinants* of political control. (Wood and Waterman 1991, 822).

The authors, then, propose a number of possible determinants, such as bureaucratic structure, personnel attributes, mission complexity, and issue salience (a topic covered in Chapters III and IV). Since the time this conclusion was made seventeen years ago, there has been a surprising paucity in research that has taken on this challenge. Recently, several scholars have empirically examined how structure (Whitford 2002a), decentralization (Whitford 2002b) and salience (Ringquist, Worsham, and Eisner 2003) influence political control or the propensity to engage in attempts at controlling the bureaucracy. Yet, there has not been a systematic attempt to determine what factors facilitate or constrain political attempts at influencing policy outcomes. Using the governance framework discussed in Chapter II, this chapter examines how bureaucratic factors moderate the influence political actors have on public policy outcomes.

**Political Control versus Political Influence**

The term political control is most commonly used in political science literature, particularly research using the principal-agent framework. The use of the word "control" is central to the underlying assumptions of principal agent theory, where there is an inherent conflict between the interests of the principal and the agent. Terry Moe explains the core assumptions of agency theory in the following manner:

> The principal-agent model is an analytic expression of the agency relationship, in which one party, the principal, considers entering into a contractual agreement with another, the agent, in the expectations that the agent will subsequently choose actions that produce outcomes desired by the principal….[T]he principal's decision problem is far more involved than simply locating a qualified person -- for there is no guarantee that the agent, once hired, will in effect choose to pursue the principal's best interests or to do so efficiently. The agent has his own interests at heart, and is induced to pursue the principal's objective only to the extent that the incentive structure imposed in the contract renders such behavior advantageous. (Moe 1984, 756).

Thus, a political principal can never be sure that agents are acting in the principal's best interest. Bureaucratic expertise and informational asymmetries exacerbate this uncertainty. Principals, however, can employ a variety of tactics to create incentive structures (both positive and negative) that will increase the likelihood of compliance (see Chapter II for a more detailed discussion on principal agent models). These include *ex post* controls, such as the structural design of an agency to "stack the deck" in favor

of particular interests (McCubbins, Noll and Weingast 1987), or to "hard-wire" agency preferences via structural design (Moe 1989). Alternatively, political actors can resort to *ex ante* controls such as "police patrols" or less costly "fire-alarms" (McCubbins and Schwartz 1984). Thus, central to this framework is the notion that political actors must monitor and coerce bureaucrats in order to ensure that they are fulfilling their obligations. Thus, at its core, agency theory assumes there is inherent goal conflict between principals and agents.

While goal conflict is a key assumption in agency theory, it is rarely directly incorporated in empirical tests of political control. Indeed, the bureaucracy in general is rarely explicitly accounted for in the empirical political science literature on political control. Conceptually, however, political *influence* – as opposed to *control* – makes no such assumption. The key difference is the conceptualization of how political actors get what they want: political control implies coercion while political influence does not. The core question this chapter addresses is whether political actors get more of what they want and, more importantly, how do bureaucratic factors either contribute or hinder their success. This directly addresses Wood and Waterman's challenge in examining the determinants of political influence.

**Testing for Political Influence**

In the principal-agent framework, the conventional way political scientists have tested political influence on policy outcomes is by examining the relationship between some measure of political preferences and policy outputs or outcomes. Wood and

Waterman (1991, 1994), for example, began by examining a number of outputs from several different bureaucratic agencies (e.g., EPA, NRC, FTC, EEOC, FDA). They model agency outputs as an autoregressive process, thus eliminating any temporal trends that would explain increases or decreases in these outputs. Furthermore, a set of control variables that may explain outputs can be added to the model to account for changes in outputs not associated with political factors. Finally, political preferences are measured in a variety of ways, such as interest group scores, partisanship percentages, political appointees or changes in budgets. Thus, the general model is:

$$O_t = \beta_1 O_{t-1} + \beta_2 X_t + \beta_3 P_t + \varepsilon \qquad \textbf{[5.1]}$$

where,

$O_t$ represents current agency outputs,

$O_{t-1}$ represents past outputs,

$X_t$ is a vector of control variables,

$P_t$ represents political preferences or a political event,

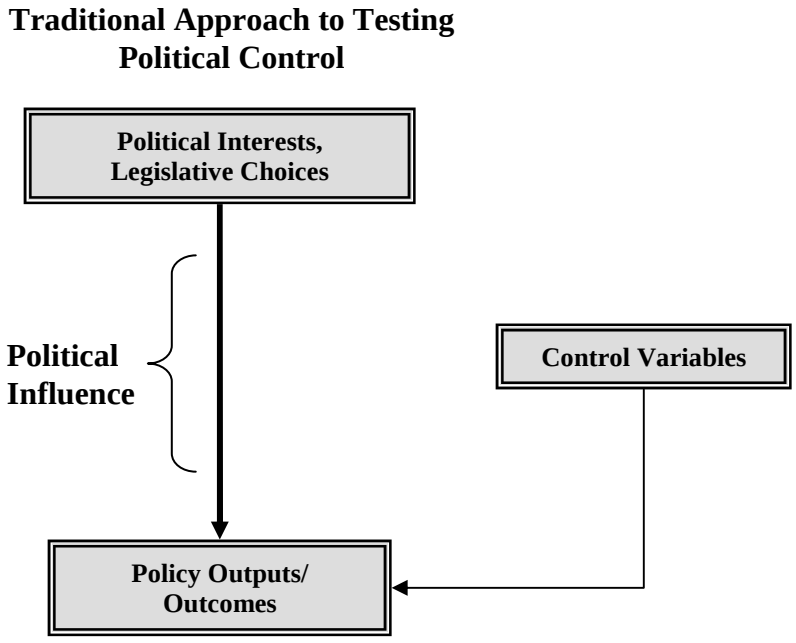
and $\varepsilon$ is a random error term.

In this setup, $\beta_3$ represents the extent to which political preferences influence outputs (i.e. political control) above and beyond the effects of past outputs and other factors that may influence current outputs.

Figure 5.1 presents this in the logic of governance framework. Traditional political control research, then, examines how political variables influence policy

outputs after controlling for other factors. For example, in Wood and Waterman's work, one political variable they examined was the appointment of an agency head and how particular political appointees changed policy outputs. Using sophisticated time-series techniques, the political appointee was modeled as an intervention; and the authors estimated how outputs changed following the appointment of a particular appointee.

**Figure 5.1 A Simple Model of Political Influence**




This approach, however, does not directly incorporate bureaucracy. Alternatively, a governance framework is explicitly concerned with multiple actors and levels in the governance process. Putting the traditional political influence approach in a governance framework, allows us to account for bureaucracy in examining questions of political influence – an undertaking public administration scholars have strongly advocated. Additionally, a governance framework allows us to engage Wood and

Waterman's call in exploring the determinants of political influence, many of which include bureaucratic, managerial, and institutional factors.

Figure 5.2 incorporates the multiple levels of governance in explaining how the relationship between political preferences and policy outputs and outcomes is conditional on a host of other factors. This, then, examines the factors that facilitate or constrain political influence. That is, political influence may be greater under certain circumstances than others. This framework models this relationship as an interactive relationship rather than a simple linear relationship. It can be summarized formally as:

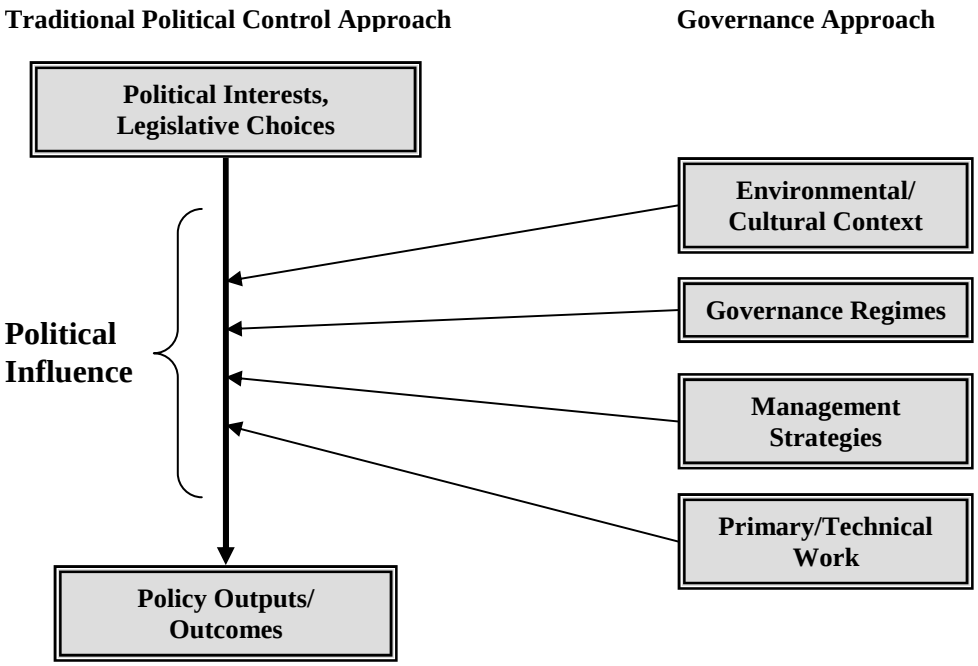
$$O_t = \beta_1 O_{t-1} + \beta_2 X_t + \beta_3 P_t + \beta_4 C + \beta_5 PC + \varepsilon \qquad \textbf{[5.2]}$$

where all variables are defined as they were in equation 5.1, and the added component, C, represents some catalyst or condition that either enhances or hinders political influence. This catalyst is then interacted with the political preference variable, which allows us to calculate the conditional effect of political preferences on outputs and determine if this effect changes as the catalyst changes. If a condition increases the extent of political influence, $\beta_5$ should be positive, while a condition that reduces political influence should be negative.

As the model suggests, conceptually, there are numerous catalysts or conditions that can be considered in this framework. These include factors within the broader environment, institutional structures, organizational culture, mission complexity, managerial choices and traits, and personnel characteristics of street-level bureaucrats,

just to name a few. This chapter considers the importance of two broad factors of theoretical importance to research on political influence; namely, goal conflict and political insulation.

**Figure 5.2. A Conditional Model of Political Influence**




## Preference/Goal Conflict

As mentioned above, the principal-agent framework assumes that there is conflict in the preferences and goals of political principals and bureaucratic agents. This conflict often develops over time, principally since (in theory) wining political coalitions in legislatures "stack the deck" in favor of particular groups or interests and "hardwire" agency preferences when the organization is designed (e.g. McCubbins, Noll and

Weingast 1987, 1989; Moe 1984). Indeed, Moe (1989) argues that political actors – knowing that they will not retain political power indefinitely – intentionally create rules and procedures that make political influence more difficult so that future political coalitions will not be able to easily manipulate policy outcomes (see also Lewis 2003). Thus, when new political interests gain power, they find that the preferences of bureaucratic agencies differ from their own.

Much of the formal political control literature is based on conceptualizations of how the political preferences (i.e. ideal points) of different institutions diverge and, based on these preference differences, theoretical propositions concerning likely outcomes (e.g. extent of discretion) are derived (e.g. Huber and Shipan 2002; Epstein and O'Halloran 1999). While the use of preference divergence is ubiquitous in formal models of delegation, most of the empirical work on political control only examines the political preferences of the political institutions, but not the preferences of bureaucratic actors. Public administration scholars who study bureaucratic politics often examine bureaucratic values at great length, but are largely uninterested in political preferences and how political actors may or may not influence bureaucrats. Research on bureaucratic politics, rather, is largely interested in the reverse; that is, how bureaucrats shape their political environments (e.g. O'Leary 1994).

This chapter, alternatively, takes a different approach in that it is interested in how political influence is conditional on the level of divergence or convergence in the goals and values of politicians and bureaucrats. The larger the preference differential

between policy-makers and administrators/bureaucrats, the more difficult – and thus the less likely – it will be for political actors to achieve policy outputs that are consistent with their policy preferences.[42] In a review of agency theory in the marketplace, Pratt and Zeckhauser (1985) contend that "agency loss is the most severe when the interests or values of the principal and agent diverge substantially" (5). While this is a simple and commonsensical conclusion, having convergent policy preferences and values is arguably the most effective way for politicians to get what they want (e.g. Meier 2000).

Goal conflict or preference divergence can occur at different levels within an agency, for example, agency executives versus street-level bureaucrats. Wood and Waterman (1991, 1994) considered the ideology of political appointees (measured largely as the appointing president) and examine how policy outputs changed as result of their leadership within the agency. While this is not quite the same as what is proposed here (i.e. they used political appointees as a measure of the *president's* political preferences rather than the bureaucracy's), they do implicitly recognize that the preferences of agency executives are important in determining policy outputs. There are a variety of ways one can measure the preferences of an agency's administration; however, what this project is interested in is measuring the extent to which administrators' values differ from the values of the elected institution. The greater the difference, the less political influence elected officials will have in shaping agency outcomes, *ceteris paribus*.

[42] Theoretically, this could be achieved though detailed legislations/less delegation, more monitoring, etc. – all of which are costly and less likely to produce the desired results than would having convergent preferences.

The second level of value/preference convergence this chapter examines is at the level of technical or primary work. In his now classic work, Michael Lipsky (1980) found that front-line bureaucrats – or what he termed "street-level" bureaucrats – exercised varying degrees of discretion in performing their jobs. In times of resource scarcity, street-level bureaucrats ration services, control clients, and conserve worker resources – all without direction from higher authorities (Lipsky 1980, 86). Lipsky's research indicates that street-level bureaucrats can be more responsive to their clients than to their political principals, largely due to vague or conflicting goal expectations proffered by political elites. His work ultimately concludes street-level bureaucrats make decisions and judgment calls on a daily basis, many of which are not directly guided by the rules or mission of the organization for which they work. This discretion they exercise directly shapes *de facto* public policy (see also Brehm and Gates 1997).

Indeed, Wood and Waterman's work (1994) demonstrates how lower-level bureaucrats can often resist political pressures. Following Reagan's inauguration, EPA enforcements actually increased despite the Reagan administration's efforts to reduce EPA outputs. Wood and Waterman attribute this spike in enforcements to "a zealous cadre of environmentalists" within the EPA who intentionally thwarted the administration's attempts at reducing enforcements. Similarly, O'Leary (1994) chronicles the successful efforts of lower- and mid-level bureaucrats within the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Nevada Department of Wildlife to surreptitiously shape their political environments in opposition to the preferences of their superiors. Therefore, the policy preferences of front-line bureaucrats may be as, if not more

important than the policy preferences of agency administrators and chief executives in shaping policy outputs and outcomes. The expectation, then, is that the more supportive of the political goals of an elected institution the front-line employees within an agency are, the more influence that political institution will have. Thus, in examining whether preference/goal alignment enhances political influence, this chapter considers the degree of policy preference convergence between political institutions and both agency heads and street-level bureaucrats.

**Insulation from Political Pressure**

While the political control/principal-agent literature adopts a top-down approach to political-bureaucratic interactions, a separate literature on bureaucratic politics has developed in public administration over the past several decades. Research on bureaucratic politics is interested in how bureaucratic institutions acquire power and how they influence their political environments, including political institutions. Judith Gruber (1987) contends that bureaucrats prefer to retain significant levels of discretion and favor systems where the power of outside actors is minimal. Like Thompson (1967), she argues that bureaucrats seek to buffer themselves from outside influences. Furthermore, she argues that bureaucrats attempt to insulate themselves from political influences, relying rather on other bureaucrats and peers for guidance and advice rather than on elected officials, whom they view suspiciously whose motivations are self-interested political. This comports with one of Wilson's (1989) conclusions that bureaucratic executives value autonomy perhaps even more than resources (181-195).

Related to issues of political insulation is work on bureaucratic influence. In his classic book, *Bureaucracy, Politics and Public Policy*, Francis Rourke (1969) explores the determinants of bureaucratic power. Rourke argues that the primary sources of bureaucratic power are based on bureaucrats' *political* power and expertise. Political power includes support from the public and recognizes that administrators' ability to mobilize constituencies including politicians, interest groups and private citizens is essential to building bureaucratic power. Thus, it is the cultivation of political and social networks within the agency's environment that will translate into bureaucratic power and independence. Rourke also argues that knowledge is power; thus, bureaucratic expertise is a critical source of bureaucratic power.

Work on public management also suggests that public administrators seek to buffer environmental influences from influencing their organization. O'Toole and Meier (1999) contend that managers establish networks that facilitate in their ability to manage their environments. Such management entails adopting "a strategy of buffering the environment or actively seek[ing] to exploit the environment for the benefit of the program system" (1999, 517). This buffering may include attempts to insulate the organization from political influences.

This literature, then, suggests that managers who are motivated to gain bureaucratic independence and power – and are successful at doing so – are more likely to be insulated from the political influence. There is reason to believe that managers make conscious decisions to develop their own political capital and political networks,

which in turn may work to make political attempts at shaping policy outputs less successful. This chapter proceeds by examining the role these two broad concepts – goal conflict and political insulation – play in either limiting or enhancing political influence on organizational outputs and outcomes.

**Data and Methods**

This chapter again takes advantage of the Texas public school district data. Wood and Waterman (1991, 1994), in testing for political control, examined a handful of agencies over an extended period of time. This allowed them to examine the effects of *political* changes, such as political appointees, budget cuts, and presidential administrations, on policy outputs of each agency. However, the amount of *bureaucratic* variation in these several agencies is not large. Since this project is interested in how variation in bureaucratic characteristics can influence political influence, we need data on a wide range of agencies that perform similar functions, yet also possess distinct organizational and managerial traits. Texas school districts provide just that. This chapter utilizes data on school districts from 2000-2005, resulting in as many as 5619 usable observations (depending on the model).

Compared to many other bureaucratic organizations, school districts are highly professional and tend to be decentralized. Indeed, in 2007, over 99 percent of teachers in Texas had at least a Bachelor's degree and nearly 22 percent had at least a Master's degree (TEA 2007 State AEIS Report). Nearly 99 percent of Texas superintendents

have at least a Master's degree and 34 percent have a doctorate.[43] While this high level of expertise should work to limit political influence, school districts possess governance structures that should facilitate political influence. First, they are governed by an elected school board that appoints the superintendent, establishes the budget and tax rate, and determines general educational policy. Second, school districts tend to be flat organizations, thus the distance between school board members and street-level bureaucrats (teachers) is small. This facilitates the opportunity for greater political influence due to lower transaction costs. Third, school districts only deal with one type of policy – education – which allows political actors to be more focused on a single policy domain. Finally, there is no separation of powers, which can lead to problems with multiple principals complicating the principal-agent link. These characteristics ought to increase the extent to which political actors will be able to influence policy outcomes. While this is ideal for testing the theoretical considerations discussed above, caution should be employed in generalizing the results to other political systems (e.g. the federal government).

*Political Preferences: Representation as a Proxy for Values*

Chapter IV discussed in some detail the theoretical link between race/ethnicity and values, which is expected to translate into policy preferences. A great deal of empirical literature suggests that race and ethnicity are appropriate proxies for motivations and preferences of elected officials (Karnig and Welch 1980; Dye and

[43] These figures are based on 735 superintendents who replied to the survey administered by Kenneth J. Meier and Larry O'Toole in the fall of 2007.

Renick 1981; Eisinger 1982; Fraga, Meier and England 1986; Polinard, Wrinkle and Longoria 1990; Meier and Stewart 1991; Kerr and Mladenka 1994; Rocha 2006). Thus, Latino representatives, for example, are more likely to advance the interests of Latino constituents than are Anglo representatives. This chapter, then, uses the ethnic composition of the elected school board as a surrogate for the policy preferences of the institution. School boards with higher levels of Latino descriptive representation are more likely to prefer and pursue policy outputs and outcomes that benefit Latino students. This is not to say that non-Latino representatives do *not* want Latino students to succeed; rather, it is simply less likely to be on their radar or one of their top priorities unless they are in an all-Latino district, in which case Latino student performance simply becomes overall student performance. Thus, to measure the preferences of the school board, the percentage of Latino school board members is used.

*Dependent Variables*

In addition to Latino TAKS pass rates, nine other Latino-specific policy outputs/outcomes are used in this analysis, ranging from low-end performance indicators to high-end outcomes. Theoretically, some outputs are easier to manipulate than others; thus, we might expect more political influence over certain outputs/outcomes, but not others. Gormley (1986, 1989) argues that elected officials are most likely to intervene in policy areas that are high in salience and low in complexity; alternatively, issues that are high in complexity and low in salience are the least likely to receive political attention (see also Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner 2003). Latino student attendance rates

represent a low-end policy output and are calculated as the average daily attendance rate for Latino students for the school year. Latino graduation rates – another measure that is considered – are measured as the number of Latino students who received their diploma on time or early as a percentage of Latino students within their cohort.[44] The Texas State Board of Education also had developed a set of more rigorous standards for graduation designated as Recommended or Distinguished. The TEA reports the rates of students who satisfy the course requirements for either the Recommended High School Program or the Distinguished Achievement Program. Thus, in addition to Latino graduation rates, the percentage of Latino students who have earned the *Recommended* distinction is also used as a dependent variable.

Several higher-level indicators are also used, namely, the percentage of Latino students who enroll in advanced courses, the percentage who take advanced placement (AP) classes, and two measures of Latino student success on AP exams. Advanced placement classes are offered to prepare students for college, and students who successfully pass the national AP exam with a score of 3 or higher may earn college credit for the course. The TEA offers two measures of performance on the AP exams: 1) the percentage of Latino *examinees* who scored at least a 3 on at least one AP exam, and

[44] For example, for the 2004-2005 school year this would be calculated as:

$$\frac{\#\text{ of Latino students from cohort who received a diploma by the end of 2004 - 05}}{\#\text{ of students in the 2001 - 02 cohort}}$$

2) the number of AP Latino examination *scores* at or above the criterion for AP passage.[45]

**Table 5.1 Summary Statistics for Dependent Variables**

| | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino TAKS Pass Rate | 68.17 | 15.65 | 8 | 100 |
| Latino Attendance Rate | 96.03 | 1.08 | 89.8 | 99.7 |
| Latino Graduation Rate | 74.62 | 25.39 | 0 | 100 |
| % Latino Graduates - Recommended | 54.55 | 21.94 | 0 | 100 |
| % Latino in Advanced Classes | 12.55 | 9.49 | 0 | 83.3 |
| % Latino Students Taking AP Classes | 7.71 | 9.32 | 0 | 85.7 |
| % Latino Students Pass AP Exams | 46.98 | 23.77 | 0 | 100 |
| % Latino Scores Above AP Pass Criterion | 37.42 | 21.68 | 0 | 100 |
| % Latino Taking SAT/ACT | 43.38 | 18.55 | 0 | 100 |
| % Latino Student Above 1110 SAT | 12.14 | 11.10 | 0 | 83.3 |

Finally, two measures of top-end performance measuring college preparedness are used: the percentage of Latino students who have taken either the SAT or the ACT and the percentage of Latino students who score at or above 1110 on the SAT or its equivalent on the ACT (24 or above). Table 5.1 presents summary statistics for all 10

[45] More specifically, these scores include both AP exams and the International Baccalaureate Organization's International Baccalaureate (IB) examinations, and are calculated as:

$$\%\ \text{Latino Students} = \frac{\#\ \text{of 11th \& 12th grade Latino AP \& IB examinees who scored at or above criterion}}{\#\ \text{11th \& 12th grade Latino AP \& IB examinees}}$$

$$\%\ \text{Latino scores} = \frac{\#\ \text{of 11th \& 12th grade Latino AP \& IB examination scores at or above criterion}}{\#\ \text{11th \& 12th grade Latino AP \& IB examination scores}}$$

dependent variables. As can be seen, there is considerable variation on all these variables (perhaps with the exception of attendance rates).

*Preference/Goal Alignment*

To measure the extent to which preferences between political actors and bureaucrats converge or conflict, measures of bureaucratic preferences are needed in addition to measures of political preferences. As suggested earlier, this can be done by examining either managerial/administrative preferences or the values of street-level bureaucrats. Since our measure of political preferences is based on ethnicity, we could similarly use a measure of managerial ethnicity as a proxy for values. Indeed, there has been a large and growing literature on representative bureaucracy that examines how racial and ethnic compositions of agencies are linked to positive policy outcomes for minority clienteles (Mosher 1968; Selden 1997; Dolan 2000; Keiser et al. 2002; Meier, Wrinkle and Polinard 1999). The logic to this theory is much the same as the reasoning behind research on descriptive and substantive representation. Representative bureaucracy argues that the socialization process associated with the development of values and preferences is correlated with demographic differences (race, ethnicity, gender, religion, etc.). These values inform the decisions bureaucrats make especially when bureaucrats have considerate latitude in decision-making in the implementation of policy. Thus, a bureaucracy that is representative of the public in terms of demographic traits – passively representative – will make decisions differently than one that is not, and these differences in values may be reflected in the policy outputs and outcomes the

bureaucracy produces – active representation (see Meier 1993 for a discussion of the necessary conditions for this to transpire; see also Meier and Hawes [*forthcoming*] for a conceptual application of this theory in a comparative context).

The goal in measuring political-bureaucratic preference alignment is to capture the extent to which political and bureaucratic institutions possess share values. Since ethnicity is used as a proxy for political preferences, we can examine the ethnicity of the superintendent with the expectation that Latino superintendents will more closely share preferences with Latino school board members than will non-Latino superintendents. Since our measures of policy outputs are also Latino-specific, the expectation is that, all else being equal, Latino political influence will be greater when the superintendent passively represents Latino students (i.e. the superintendent is Latino). That is,

*$H_1$: Political influence will be greater when the superintendent is Latino.*[46]

As noted earlier, we can also examine the divergence/converge in preferences between political actors and street-level bureaucrats. The expectation is that the more supportive the front-line employees are of the goals and values of the political branch, the more success the political branch will be in achieving those goals. This could be measured in a variety of ways including simply the percentage of street-level bureaucrats (i.e. teachers) who are Latino (see Meier, O'Toole and Hawes 2007). If we measure goal/value alignment in this manner, we would expect to see a positive relationship between the level of teacher Latino representation and amount of political influence. To

[46] In the principal-agent framework, this is akin to the adverse selection problem.

measure value convergence – or bureaucratic support – I simply take the number of Latino teachers within each district as a percentage of the total number of teachers.[47] Theoretically, we should expect the effect of representation to increase as the level of support within the bureaucracy increases. Thus,

> $H_2$: *Political influence will increase as the percentage of Latino teachers increases.*

The third measure of goal/preference conflict examines the extent to which the school board supports the superintendent. In the Meier-O'Toole surveys (see Chapter III for a discussion on the surveys), superintendents were asked to rate the quality of school board support. Superintendents rated school board support as Excellent (53 %), Above Average (33 %), Average (11%), Below Average (79%) and Inadequate (0.8%). Arguably, superintendents who believe the school board supports them are more likely to share the school board's values and goals. Put differently, superintendents who perceive that school board support is sub-par, probably do not see eye-to-eye with the school board on policy matters. Therefore,

> $H_3$: *Higher levels of school board support (i.e. policy alignment) should be associated with higher levels of political influence.*

[47] Data on teacher and superintendent ethnicity were obtained from the Texas Education Agency's staff and role data files.

*Political Insulation*

The second broad set of factors that this project considers to be theoretically relevant in determining political influence deals with the extent to which bureaucrats insulate themselves from political pressure. One component to bureaucratic insulation from politics is the ability of managers to cultivate political support and networks within their political environments. The Meier-O'Toole survey asks a battery of questions pertaining to managerial interactions with their actors in their environments. Using these survey items, Meier and O'Toole (2001, 2003) have developed and empirically validated a measure of managerial networking. Recall that this measure was a key variable in examining the likelihood of political contact in Chapters III and IV. This networking variable includes superintendent interaction with the TEA, state legislators, local business leaders, as well as peers (other superintendents). Conceivably, managers who have developed extensive networks are more likely to have built social and political capital in their environments. This development of social and political clout is arguably akin to Rourke's description of the cultivation of political support that translates into bureaucratic influence and power. Thus,

$H_4$: *Managerial networking is expected to reduce the extent of political influence of school boards.*

A related hypothesis is that entrenched superintendents will also be less responsive to political pressure from school boards, thus reducing the extent of political influence on policy outputs/outcomes. Managers who have been the superintendent of a

district for an extended period of time are more likely to have developed a political, social and professional network that may afford them the political clout needed to resist political pressure. The Meier-O'Toole survey provides data on the number of years the superintendent has been employed as the district's superintendent.[48] We can test this with the following hypothesis:

$H_5$: *Executive entrenchment will work to reduce political influence on policy outputs and outcomes.*

Another form of insulation from politics may involve budget autonomy from the school board. Wood and Waterman (1991, 1994) demonstrate that political principals can use budgets to influence bureaucratic behavior and ultimately outputs. However, the extent to which administrators secure finds from sources not directly linked to their political principal, the more they will be insulated from any budget manipulations politicians may attempt. Presumably school boards have more control over local, rather than non-local monies.[49] The TEA provides a break down of sources of revenue for each district. Using these data, the percent of each district's budget that came from non-local (as opposed to local) sources was calculated. Thus,

$H_6$: *Budget Autonomy will work to undermine political influence, ceteris paribus.*

[48] An alternative measure would be to examine the length of time the superintendent had been employed in the district in any capacity, since political clout within the community may have been developed over this time period as well. I use the superintendent employment measure since I believe it more closely fits with Rourke's description of *executives* cultivating support. That said, the second measure produces consistent finding that are actually more robust.

[49] Most state money is assigned using rigid formulae that local school board would not have control over.

The final hypothesis deals with relative distance between political decisions and implementation. Conceptually, every additional decision-maker within a hierarchy creates additional uncertainty. Political actors could conceivably monitor and influence one decision-maker more effectively than 5 decision-makers, particularly if some "deciders" (to quote George W. Bush) are further down the hierarchy. Ultimately it is an issue of accountability, where more layers of hierarchy muddles responsibility. This is what Downs (1967) refers to as "leakage of authority", which is the result of the number of layers of hierarchy. There are a number of ways to measure hierarchy such as taking the ratio of managers to personnel (see Meier, O'Toole and Hawes 2007). In this project, I focus on the amount of decision-making authority that is transferred to lower levels within the hierarchy. The Meier-O'Toole survey includes an item that captures the amount of discretion that is granted by superintendents to principals (i.e. middle managers). Conceivably, superintendents who abdicate some of their decision-making authority to middle managers have less control of the decisions and thus outcomes that result. Increased allocation of discretion down the chain of command will likely increase the variability and uncertainty related to decisions and their consequences. Therefore,

> $H_7$: *The more discretion in decision making superintendents assign to principals, the less influence political actors will have.*

Table 5.2 presents summary statistics for these 7 variables.

**Table 5.2. Summary Statistics for Catalytic Variables**

| Concept | Variable | Mean | Std. Dev. | Min | Max |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Goal Convergence*** | | | | | |
| Supportive Executive ($H_1$) | Latino Superintendent | 0.07 | 0.25 | 0 | 1 |
| Supportive Bureaucracy ($H_2$) | % Latino Teachers | 9.53 | 18.74 | 0 | 100 |
| Policy Alignment ($H_3$) | School Board Support | 4.36 | 0.77 | 1 | 5 |
| ***Political Insulation*** | | | | | |
| Political Network ($H_4$) | Managerial Networking | -0.03 | 0.89 | -2.71 | 3.06 |
| Entrenchment ($H_5$) | Years as SI | 5.60 | 4.90 | 0 | 40 |
| Leakage of Authority ($H_6$) | Discretion to Principals | 3.66 | 0.85 | 1 | 6 |
| Budget Autonomy ($H_7$) | % Non-Local Revenue | 55.50 | 22.45 | 2 | 100 |

*Control Variables*

As in the models in the previous chapters, there are a number of other factors that may influence organizational outputs and outcomes. In Wood and Waterman's (1991, 1994; Wood 1992) research design, the primary control was history; that is, they used advanced time-series techniques to account for past levels of outputs and any trends in the dependent variable. Once history is accounted for, any change in outputs following a political event (e.g. appointee, budget cut) could be attributed to that political event. In the present case, however, I do not have an extended time-period of data and cannot take advantage of advanced time-series analysis techniques. Yet, past levels of outputs may still be important to consider; therefore, a lagged value of the dependent variable is used, which accounts for past levels of performance.

A second control variable measures how well other students within a school district are performing. Even after controlling for resources, some districts are simply better than others, and Latino students in these districts are likely to perform better than Latino students in other districts. To control for this, I include the performance of Anglo students on each respective performance indicator (e.g. in the graduation model, Anglo graduation rates are included in the model). The interpretation of the Latino representation coefficients, then, is the change in Latino performance from last year's performance (because of the lagged dependent variable) that was beyond any impact Latino representation may have had on Anglo students.

In addition to the lagged dependent variable and the control for Anglo student performance, a set of other control variables that have been linked to student performance are also included. These controls include demographic (percent low income students, percent Latino students and percent black students), personnel (percent non-certified teachers, percent low-experience [less than 5 years] teachers and student-teacher ratio), and resource-related (percent instructional expenditures and average teacher salary) variables (see Chapters III and IV for more on the control variables).

**Findings**

To test these hypotheses, Texas school district data from 2000-2005 are used. All models use OLS, and due to small levels of heteroskedasticity in most models, I use Huber-White robust standard errors clustered by school district. As there are 7 hypotheses and 10 dependent variables, there are 70 models to summarize. Furthermore,

each model includes an interaction term that requires interpretation. The results for the baseline models (no interactive terms) as well as the 70 interactive models are included in Tables 5.6 through 5.12 in the Appendix at the end of this chapter.

*Assessing Political Influence*

Using Wood and Waterman's operationalization of political influence, the extent to which school board members exert political influence will be measured as the relationship between political preferences and policy outcomes. In the present case, political preferences are measured as the percentage of school board members who are Latino; thus, political influence is measured as the effect (slope coefficient) that Latino representation has on Latino specific outputs and outcomes (i.e. $\beta_3$ from equation 5.1). The expectation is that this coefficient will be positive and its size will be an indication of and the magnitude of political influence. This project, then, examines factors that either dampen or enhance political influence, that is, factors that either increase or decrease the size of this relationship/slope. This is captured in the conditional slope for political influence, which is conditional on the value of the catalytic variable (C in equation 5.2). This is calculated as: Conditional $\beta$ of $P = \beta_1 + \beta_3 C$, where P is the political preferences and C is the catalyst.

Yet, there is another way to consider and operationalize political influence. If we conceptualize political influence as the extent to which politicians get more of what they want, then it is possible that some factors/catalysts may enhance political influence while decreasing the direct effects of political influence as captured in the conditional slopes.

Consider the following example. District 1 and District 2 have the same policy preferences, that is, the same level of Latino representation, say 40 percent. District 1, appoints Superintendent Soyuna Abogada who is a strong advocate for Latino students, which results in significant improvements in Latino student performance. District 2, however, is stuck with Superintendent Ima Gringo.[50] In the former case, the district observes improvements in Latino student performance, while the latter case experiences average performance. In District 1, Latino representatives are getting more of what they want; however, the direct effect of representation may actually not be as large as in the latter case. That is, by hiring Superintendent Abogada, the school board can do less but actually get more of what they want – positive Latino outputs. Thus, we may see a case where the marginal effect of Latino representation (the conditional slope) on student performance actually decreases, while the actual outputs increase. If the regression coefficients were:

$$\hat{Y} = 60 + .55(\text{Representation}) + 3.5(\text{Abogada}) - 0.05(\text{Rep*Abogada}) \qquad \textbf{[5.3]}$$

the marginal effects of representation decreases with the better superintendent (from .55 to .5), even though the actual outcome ($\hat{Y}$) is higher with Abogada than without her (83.5 vs. 82). Thus, one can examine the conditional nature of political influence in more than one way – via the change in marginal effect of the political variable over different values of the catalyst, or via the change in the expected values for the outcome

[50] The names used here are fictional. Any resemblances to real individuals are pure coincidence.

variable over different levels of the catalyst variable – and get results that are subject to different interpretations.

*An Illustration*

Two catalytic variables – each with a different directional expectation – are used to demonstrate how political influence can be assessed. We expect that a supportive bureaucracy ($H_2$) with respect to the passive representation of street-level bureaucrats (i.e. percentage Latino teachers) will result in more political influence, while increased discretion granted to principals ($H_6$ – i.e., Leakage of Authority) will hinder the ability of school board members to influence policy outputs and outcomes. To examine these conditional relationships on Latino TAKS performance, we can use the following models:

$$\text{Latino TAKS}_t = \beta_1(\text{Latino Representation}) + \beta_2(\text{Discretion}) + \beta_3(\text{Representation} \times \text{Discretion}) + \beta_4(\text{Latino TAKS}_{t-1}) + \beta_5(\text{Anglo TAKS}_t) + \text{Controls} + \varepsilon \quad \textbf{[5.4]}$$

$$\text{Latino TAKS}_t = \beta_1(\text{Latino Representation}) + \beta_2(\text{Latino Teachers}) + \beta_3(\text{Representation} \times \text{Teachers}) + \beta_4(\text{Latino TAKS}_{t-1}) + \beta_5(\text{Anglo TAKS}_t) + \text{Controls} + \varepsilon \quad \textbf{[5.5]}$$

Table 5.3 presents the results from each of these models. The first model (column 2) is the model examining the Latino TAKS pass rates as a function of representation, the discretion granted to principals and the control variables. Since this is an interactive model, the coefficients for the constitutive terms of the interaction are conditional on the value of the other variable. Thus, principal discretion is negatively

**Table 5.3. Supportive Bureaucracy and Discretion as Catalysts**

| | DV = Latino TAKS Pass Rates | |
|---|---|---|
| *Catalyst* = | Discretion to Principals | % Latino Teachers |
| Latino Representation | 0.103 | 0.059 |
| | (0.040)* | (0.019)** |
| *Catalyst* | -2.244 | 0.113 |
| | (0.289)** | (0.021)** |
| Representation × *Catalyst* | -0.013 | -0.007 |
| | (0.011) | (0.0003)* |
| Lagged Latino TAKS Pass Rate | 0.384 | 0.315 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.014)** |
| Anglo TAKS Pass Rate | 0.797 | 0.863 |
| | (0.029)** | (0.020)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.059 | 0.050 |
| | (0.024)* | (0.017)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.122 | -0.157 |
| | (0.019)** | (0.016)** |
| % Black Students | -0.062 | -0.061 |
| | (0.028)* | (0.021)** |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.131 | -0.073 |
| | (0.119) | (0.090) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.002 | -0.008 |
| | (0.049) | (0.039) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.023 | 0.012 |
| | (0.027) | (0.017) |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.074 | -0.027 |
| | (0.045) | (0.030) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | -0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Constant | -10.162 | -17.552 |
| | (5.609) | (4.170)** |
| Observations | 2432 | 5619 |
| R-squared | 0.68 | 0.65 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) * significant at p<.05; ** significant at p<.01

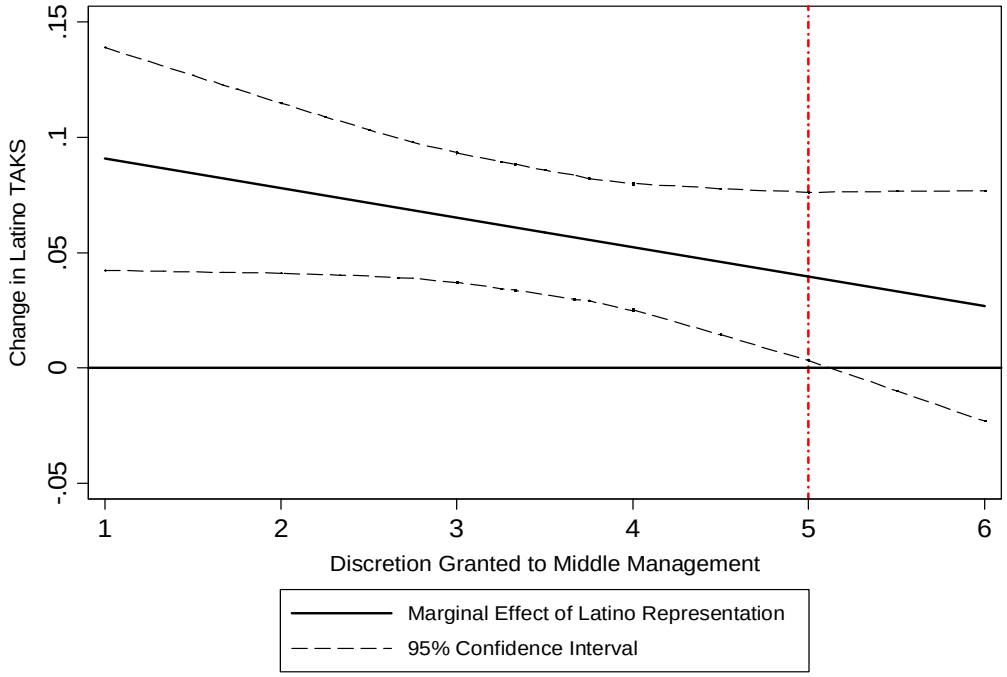
related to Latino TAKS performance (-2.2) when Latino representation on the school board is 0. Alternatively, the effect of representation on Latino TAKS pass rates is positive and statistically significant (0.1, $p < 0.05$) when the level of discretion is 0 – a value outside the range of the data. Recall that these coefficients represent the change (improvement) in performance over and above changes in Anglo performance.

Both of these values are subject to change, however, as the other variable changes. With respect to representation, we are interested whether the effect is still positive when discretion is *not* 0, but some higher level. Our expectation is that the effect of representation will decline as principal discretion increases. The interaction term, which is negative, confirms this prediction. Using this information, we can calculate the expected effect of representation for different levels of principal discretion.

Figure 5.3 presents these results, where the y-axis represents the expected value of the *coefficient* for representation and the x-axis is different levels of principal discretion. As can be seen, Latino school board representation remains a positive and statistically significant predictor of Latino TAKS pass rates so long as principal discretion is not high. At the highest levels of principal discretion, the marginal effect of representation – albeit positive – is not statistically significant. Note that the interaction term need not be statistically significant in order to observe a conditional relationship. A statistically significant interaction term simply indicates that the *difference* in the conditional coefficients is not statistically significant – as indicated in the graph where the upper confidence interval under high discretion is included in the lower confidence

interval for low discretion. What we are interested here, rather, is whether the effect of representation is statistically different from zero at one value of discretion, but not at another.

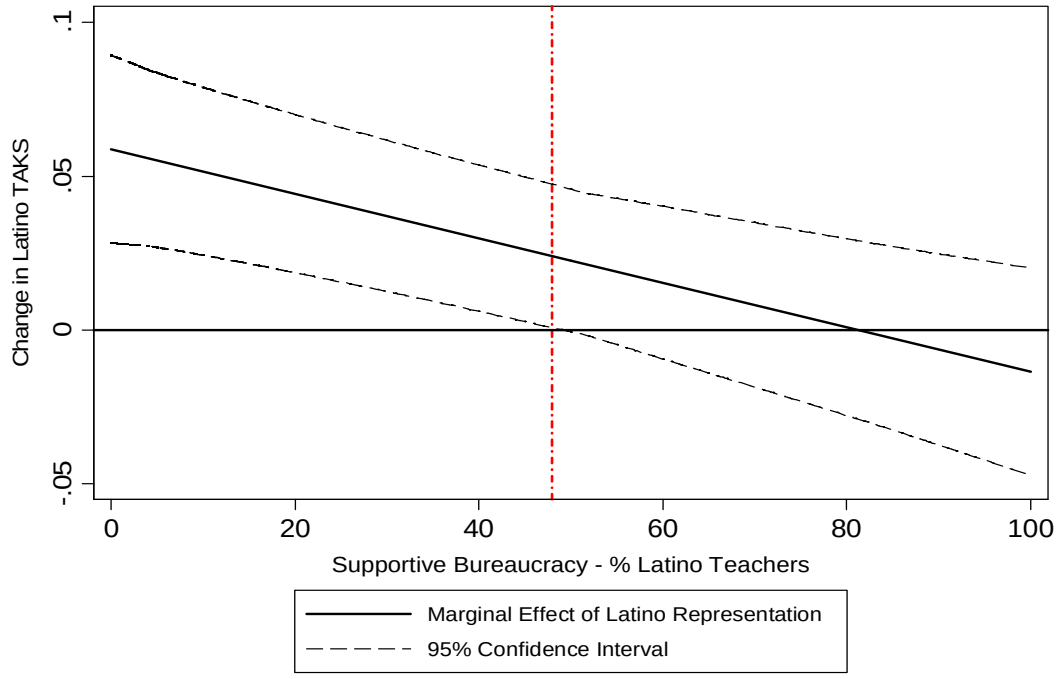
**Figure 5.3. Marginal effects of Representation on Latino TAKS Conditional on Discretion**




Turning to the second model we see that the effect of representation is positive and statistically significant (0.06, $p < 0.01$) when the percent of Latino teachers in the school district is zero. Our theoretical expectation was that a supportive bureaucracy, as measured by Latino teacher representation, would increase political influence. Yet, in examining the interaction term, we see a negative and statistically significant value. Figure 5.4 presents the marginal effects of representation conditional on Latino teachers.

We see that Latino representation has a positive and statistically significant effect on Latino TAKS pass rates until teacher representation reaches about 48 percent, in which case school board representation is no longer statistically significant. Yet, this does not necessarily discount our hypothesis. This is where the second method of assessing political influence becomes important.

**Figure 5.4. Marginal effects of Representation on Latino TAKS Conditional on Teachers**




As the hypothetical example involving Superintendent Abogada demonstrated, politicians can get more of what they want (i.e. political influence), without having to be directly involved if they have in place other mechanisms (e.g. bureaucrats who share their preferences) that achieve those same aims. In such a case, examining the marginal effects of representation does not tells us if Latino school board members are getting

more of what they want – (presumably) improved outputs for Latino students. To assess political influence in this manner, we can examine the expected values of Latino pass rates for different values of Latino teachers, while holding Latino representation at some constant value. If Latino teachers do indeed aid Latino representatives in achieving their goals (i.e. improved outputs for Latino students), then we would expect Latino outputs to increase as Latino teachers increase holding representation constant.

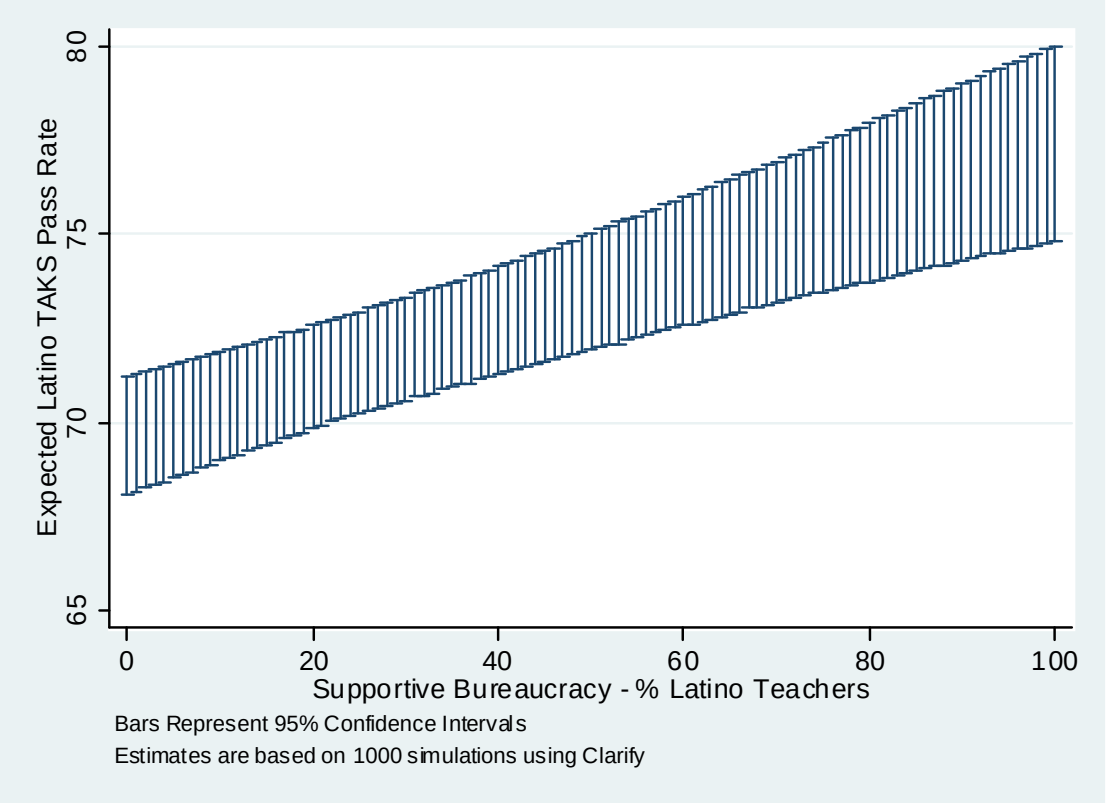
Figure 5.5 presents the expected values of Latino student pass rates for when Latino school board representation is at 48% (2 standard deviations above the mean) across the full range of possible levels of the catalytic variable, namely, the percentage of Latino teachers.[51] When Latino representation is high (48) and Latino teachers are absent, the expected Latino pass rate in the average district is 69.6 percent.[52] As the percent of teachers who are Latino increases, so does the expected pass rate. When school board representation is at 48 percent, the difference in pass rates is statistically significant once Latino teacher representation reaches about 39 percent. These findings suggest that Latino representatives are more successful in improving Latino student TAKS scores when they have teacher support. This approach essentially captures the total effect of school board *and* teacher representation on how they affect outputs together. These results can be taken as evidence that Latino teachers facilitate political influence. This approach is applied to all the remaining dependent variables and

[51] In order to obtain confidence intervals rather than just point estimates, Clarify was used to generate 1000 simulations of the coefficients. Representation was held at 48 percent and all other control variables were held at their means. Using these simulations, the 95% confidence intervals (two-tailed) were calculated.

[52] This expected value is for when all control variables are at their means – including the lagged variable; thus, these estimates are for a district with average past performance.

hypotheses. That is, the expected values are computed for low and high values of the catalytic variables while holding representation constant. If the expected values increase, then this is taken as evidence that the moderating variable aides political influence, if the expected values decrease, then this suggests that political influence (in terms of Latino school board members attaining their goals) is inhibited. Table 5.4 summarizes these findings.

**Figure 5.5. Expected Values of Latino Pass Rates for Varying Levels of Teacher Representation**




Each column presents the direction of the change in the dependent variable for a change - moving from low to high values - in the moderating variable. The first three

are the variables used to test the role of goal alignment in aiding political influence. For these three variables, the expected direction is positive; that is, higher levels of these variables should increase political influence (i.e. improvements in Latino outputs). These include Latino superintendent, the percent of teachers who are Latino and the extent of to which the school board supports the superintendent. The level of representation is held constant at 48 percent. The first column suggests that in all 10 models, Latino superintendents were associated with increases in Latino student performance. If Latino superintendents were not related to Latino school board members getting policy outputs they desire – that is, if there was no relationship – we would expect the effect to be random where we would see negative and positive effects with an equal probability. In this first case, we have 10 positive results and zero negative results. We can calculate the probability of observing 10 positive results out of 10 models using a binomial probability distribution.[53] The probability of observing 10 positive cases if the true probability for each independent trial was 0.5 (i.e. random) is 0.00098. Thus, we can be quite confident that a supportive agency head facilities political actors in achieving their goals.

This procedure is repeated for all 8 moderating variables. As can be seen, 9 of the 10 models for Latino teachers produced a positive result, which produces a probability of 0.011. The third model, however, does not perform as well. Only 5 out of

[53] The binomial probability function can be calculated as:

$$P_{(k,n)} = \left(\frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}\right)\left(p^k\right)(1-p)^{n-k}$$

where $n$ is the number of independent trials (10), $k$ is the number of successful trials and $p$ is the probability of success on each trial (0.5 in this case).

the 10 models were in the predicted direction suggesting that school board support – at least as measured here – does not work to increase political influence. This could be due to measurement error. Recall that this measure is the superintendent's perception of the quality of school board support. Perhaps the qualitative judgments used in making this assessment vary considerably from superintendent to superintendent (financial support vs. policy support vs. personnel support, etc.). These conceptualizations of support do not necessarily relate to goal or value alignment, as this variable was intended to measure. Indeed, upon closer conceptual examination, perhaps this measure actually captures support that is more akin to Rourke's notions regarding political support, in which case we would expect increased support to *reduce* political influence. Despite the limited success of this variable, as a group these measure perform quite well. The probability of observing 24 out of 30 positive relationships is less than 0.001. This probability drops to 0.00002 if the political support variable is not included (19 out of 20 trials).

The final 4 columns present the results for the measures of political insulation. Theoretically, we expect that higher levels of political insulation will work to reduce political influence (i.e., negative relationship). The first measure of political insulation was political networking, which can be used as an effective tool to buffer an organization from external influences including political ones (see O'Toole and Meier 1999). In 7 of the 10 cases, managerial networking worked to reduce political influence resulting in a probability of .172. The three cases where it improved Latino student performance were higher-end achievements, namely recommended graduates, the

**Table 5.4. Summary of Interactive Models: Direction of Effect of Catalytic Variables of Latino Student Outputs/Outcomes**

| | **Goal Convergence (+)** | | | **Political Insulation (-)** | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Supportive Executive ($H_1$) | Supportive Bureaucracy ($H_2$) | Political-Agency Alignment ($H_3$) | Political Network ($H_4$) | Entrenchment ($H_5$) | Leakage of Authority ($H_6$) | Budget Autonomy ($H_7$) |
| TAKS Pass Rates | + | + | - | - | - | - | + |
| Attendance Rate | + | - | - | - | - | + | + |
| Graduation Rates | + | + | - | - | - | - | + |
| % Graduates - Recommended Program | + | + | + | + | - | - | + |
| % in Advanced Classes | + | + | + | - | - | + | + |
| % Students Taking AP Classes | + | + | + | - | + | - | + |
| % Students Pass AP Exams | + | + | + | - | - | + | + |
| % Scores Above AP Pass Criterion | + | + | + | - | + | + | + |
| % Taking SAT/ACT | + | + | - | + | - | - | + |
| % Student Above 1110 SAT | + | + | - | + | + | + | + |
| **No. Models in Predicted Direction** | **10** | **9** | **5** | **7** | **7** | **5** | **0** |
| **Probability** | **.00098** | **.011** | **.623** | **.172** | **.172** | **.623** | **.00098** |
| Probability by Group | **24 of 30 = .0007**<br>**19 of 20 = .00002** | | | | | **19 of 40 = .437**<br>**14 of 20 = .058** | |
| Overall Probability | 43 of 70 = .036<br>33 of 40 = .00002 | | | | | | |

**+** = Political influence is enhanced; **-** = political influence is reduced. Based on Latino School Board Representation Level of 48 percent. Probabilities are directional (one-tailed)

percentage taking SAT/ACT exams, and the percentage of Latino student scoring above 1110 on the SAT. This actually comports with earlier research that found managerial networking was positively related with higher-end achievements, often at the neglect of low-end objectives and disadvantaged students (O'Toole and Meier 2004a).

We see similar results for managerial entrenchment in that 7 of the 10 results were in the expected direction (negative). This suggests that managers who are well-established in their districts are less susceptible to political pressure. Note again that it is the higher-end outputs that do not fit this trend. It could be that managers who have more experience within the district and have larger networks tend to focus on higher-end tasks that are aimed at responding to the policy preferences of the elite within the community. By putting time and energy into these objectives, some minority students are likely to peripherally benefit, even if they were not directly targeted.

The Leakage of Authority hypothesis (i.e. principal discretion) received mixed support in that only 5 of the 10 models were in the predicted direction. This suggests there is no clear pattern between discretion and political influence – at least across this set of outputs and outcomes. This is not necessarily surprising, however, since increases in discretion are theoretically linked to greater uncertainty (hence the argument for a loss of political influence). Greater uncertainty in decision-making could work to increase or decrease political influence depending on the preferences of the individual decision-makers (principals in this case). Thus, these mixed findings support the notion that the greater allocation of discretion in decision-making to middle-managers increases the

variability in decisions and thus results. This greater variability may increase or decrease political influence depending on the policy convergence of managers and politicians.

The final set of findings provides unambiguous results for Hypothesis 7. Budget autonomy is consistently related to *increased* political influence. The probability of observing 10 consistent predictions is less than 0.001, which provides strong support for this hypothesis – *but in the opposite direction*. That is, the more revenue a district receives from *non-local* sources (i.e. state or federal money), the more political influence Latino representative have in terms of improvements for Latino students. Our expectation was that increased state and federal money would result in less political control since these monies often have strings attached and are thus less subject to political manipulation on the part of school board members. However, if we reconsider our notion of who the political principal is, this actually makes sense. That is, these state and federal funds are often designated for particular purposes such as bilingual education or English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. In such a case, state and federal funding does not represent budget autonomy since there are actually more restrictions on funds. That is, *less* budget autonomy for *political* actors does not necessarily means *more* budgetary autonomy for *bureaucratic* actors. Furthermore, Latino school board members may actively seek these resources in an attempt to further their goals. Indeed, they may seek to secure state and federal funds (e.g. grants) that specifically target Latino student populations. Thus, increased revenue from state and federal sources may result in less budgetary discretion and thus autonomy for managers. If looked at this

way, the budget autonomy hypothesis is actually supported (were local funds are an indication of budget autonomy).

In all, the political insulation models produce mixed results (at least from the original conceptualization of these relationships). Of the 40 models, 19 of them produce results in the hypothesized direction, producing a probability of about .44. Yet, if the discretion and budget autonomy models are excluded (since their results can actually be seen as support for the underlying theoretical premises of Hypotheses 6 and 7), 14 of 20 models are in the hypothesized direction. The probability associated with this pattern is about 6 in 100. Across all 70 models, the probability of observing as many relationships in the hypothesized direction as we have (43 of 70) is 0.036. If the results for budget autonomy are included as *support* for Hypothesis 7 (in that more restrictions on funds result in less administrative discretion in their use), then the probability drops to 0.0000096 – or less than 10 in 1 million. Arguably, this provides substantial support for the general hypotheses, namely, the importance of goal/preference convergence and political independence.

**Conclusion**

This chapter addresses an important theoretical question that has been of central importance to political scientists, public administration scholars, bureaucrats and politicians alike – namely, how can we reconcile the need for bureaucracy with the demands democracy places on it. This question has been asked for generations by many scholars such as Woodrow Wilson (1887), Frank Goodnow (1900), Carl Friedrich

(1940), Herman Finer (1941), Dwight Waldo (1971), Herbert Simon (1998) and many others. With respect to how political actors can ensure bureaucrats are accountable to the public, the dominant paradigm in political science has been the principal-agent framework. However, in most treatments of political control, the bureaucracy is left out. This project reframes this question in a governance framework, which explicitly takes multiple levels of governance – including bureaucracy – into account.

This chapter contributes to our understanding of political influence by examining the determinants of political influence. This is an undertaking Wood and Waterman (1991) urged political scientists to explore, yet little has been done to advance our knowledge in this respect. In particular, this chapter examines the role that goal or value convergence and bureaucratic independence play in either limiting or facilitating political influence.

Rather than assuming there is goal conflict between political and bureaucratic institutions, this chapter develops measures of how closely the values of bureaucrats mirror the values of elected officials. Increased value convergence was found to be related to increased political influence – a finding that is often assumed but rarely tested. This appeared to be the case at both the executive and street-level within agencies. The most robust finding of this chapter was the importance of passive representation within the bureaucracy, which coincides with much of the literature on representative bureaucracy.

This chapter also examined the extent to which bureaucratic insulation from politics hinders political influence. Managerial networking and managerial entrenchment both appear to be related to a reduction in political influence. The evidence also suggests that this pattern holds for principal discretion and budget autonomy depending on what the theoretical expectations are. One reason the support for the political insulation hypothesis is not as robust as the goal/value convergence findings is that goal convergence is likely an important determinant of how bureaucratic independence will interact with political influence. That is, political actors may actually get more of what they want when bureaucratic autonomy is high *if the preferences of political and bureaucratic actors are similar*. Alternatively, bureaucratic independence is likely to reduce political influence if the values and goals of bureaucrats and politicians are dissimilar. This suggests there may be a three-way interaction between bureaucratic power, political preferences and goal/value convergence – a task that is better left for another time.

While these results do provide new insight into the conditional nature of political influence, these findings may not be universally generalizable. The political-bureaucratic relationship between school boards and superintendents is significantly different from the relationship between Congress or the president and a federal agency. School boards are single issue elected bodies and the problems of multiple principals are not as pronounced in this setting as is the case in federal agencies. This is not to say these findings are not important or are completely inapplicable to the federal government. These patterns, theoretically, are just as likely to occur at the federal government as at

any other level of government. However, given the significant structural differences, caution is implored in making conclusions about intergovernmental relations at the federal level based on these results. Rather, these findings are more likely to provide insight to political-bureaucratic arrangements that are more similar to the school board-district structure, which may include other local governments (e.g., city councils-city managers), higher education governance systems or parliamentary systems where separation of powers is not present.

Needless to say, there is still considerable work that needs to be done in this regard. This chapter examines 2 determinants of political influence out of countless factors. In addition to examining the role of value convergence and bureaucratic power, future research should examine other factors such as resource scarcity, managerial quality, bureaucratic expertise, mission complexity, and organizational stability.

# CHAPTER VI

# CONCLUSION

This project began with a broad empirical question that is directly connected to over forty years of policy literature, namely, is political assessment taking place in a systematic manner? Prominent literature in public policy theory contends that political assessment is a crucial part of governance (Easton 1965; Anderson 1990; Lynn, Heinrich, and Hill 2001). Empirically, however, the research on this topic is divided. On the one hand, a wealth of literature has examined the numerous ways political actors can and do monitor and influence bureaucratic policy outcomes (e.g. McCubbins, Noll and Weingast 1989; Wood and Waterman 1991, 1993, 1994; Moe 1989). Yet, other research suggests that political assessment does not occur *systematically* (Bovens et al. 1999; Caiden 1991). Rather, it is only when a political/policy fiasco occurs that political actors respond, and often for self-serving reasons (e.g. blame avoidance).

The findings presented in this project address this discrepancy in the literature. Chapter III suggests that political assessment does appear to occur, albeit in a conditional manner. Policy salience is the key determinant in predicting whether or not political actors will respond to failure. If the issue is universally salient, past failure is a significant predictor of political involvement. This finding reinforces other research that has argued policy salience is key in explaining political behavior (e.g. Gormley 1986, 1989; Ringquist, Worsham and Eisner 2003).

The evidence presented in this project suggests that not only do political actors respond to bureaucratic behavior and outputs, but that administrators respond to political actors. Both managerial networking and the amount of time managers spent on internal rather than external management were affected by political involvement with administration. Furthermore, political interactions with managers also appear to result in improved performance, but only for districts that performed poorly in the past. Alternatively, unwarranted political contact appears to have a negative effect on future performance.

While Chapter III provided evidence of political responsiveness, it was not uniform. Political responsiveness appeared to be absent in the case of Latino and African-American student performance failure, and other policy areas that were not deemed universally salient. Chapter IV investigated the conditions under which political institutions would be responsive to Latino student performance. In doing so, the concept of representation – both descriptive and substantive – was introduced and incorporated in the model of political assessment. The empirical results suggest that political values and preferences – measured via ethnicity – are a significant predictor of political responsiveness to Latino student performance. Alternatively, when school boards do not represent Latino students, the presence or absence of Latino failure – no matter how drastic – had no effect on the likelihood of political intervention. This suggests that political representation of group-based interests is a vital component to the political assessment process.

Chapter V examined the determinants of political influence. This is a challenge Wood and Waterman (1991) urged political scientists to take on, yet, with few exceptions, little has been done in this regard. Chapter V identified two theoretically important aspects of bureaucracy, namely, value convergence and bureaucratic independence, and examined to what extent they limit or facilitate political influence. Rather than simply assuming that goal conflict between political and bureaucratic institutions is present, this project employed measures of how closely the values of bureaucrats mirror the values of elected officials. As expected, political influence was enhanced by value convergence at both the executive and front-line bureaucratic levels. Alternatively, bureaucratic insulation from politics appears to limit political influence. Managers who had larger political networks appear to be less susceptible to political influence.

**Theoretical Contributions**

The theoretical contributions of this project inform at least three distinct literatures in political science and public administration. In many respects, this dissertation is about political influence (or political control). It is distinct from traditional political science research in that is adopts a governance framework. Doing so allows one to theoretically incorporate the bureaucracy (e.g. structure, management, agency preferences) into the discussion – a consideration largely ignored by empirical work on political influence. Like past research, this project stresses the importance of policy salience in explaining the behavior of political institutions. Furthermore, it

explores the nature of conditional salience, particularly the importance of race and ethnicity in shaping preferences and values. These values, in turn, inform an individual's perceptions of the level of salience associated with various policy outcomes. This is arguably a considerable contribution to the political control literature – a literature that has largely ignored race and ethnicity as important proxies for policy preferences (for an exception see Meier and O'Toole 2006).

In addition to the political control literature, this project directly engages literature on political representation, particularly research on descriptive and substantive representation of racial and ethnic minorities. While literature on the *bureaucracy* has typically found a positive relationship between passive representation and policy outcomes for minority groups (e.g. Keiser et al. 2002; Selden 1997), the large literature on *political* institutions has found mixed results especially in linking descriptive representation to policy outcomes that benefit the descriptively represented groups. By considering the role representation plays in *responding* to the needs of the represented group – that is, responding to group-specific failure – this project provides empirical support for one of the core assumptions of representation theory. That is, substantive representation entails *acting for* constituents rather than just *standing for* them (Pitkin 1967). The findings in Chapter IV provide evidence that descriptive representation is associated with an increased likelihood of political responsiveness to poor bureaucratic performance that disproportionately impacts minority students. This is a finding that is often assumed but rarely verified in the representation literature.

This chapter adds to the representation literature by providing evidence that descriptive representation alone does not automatically result in substantive representation. Districts that have representation but that are unresponsive are associated with inferior outcomes for Latinos. While representation is linked to higher probabilities that Latino-specific failure will lead to political intervention, if representatives fail to intervene, then descriptive representation alone is not linked to positive future outcomes for Latino students. This provides insight into a central component of the representation literature and empirically demonstrates the necessity of the link between descriptive and substantive representation – namely, political action.

This research also speaks to the public management literature in several respects. First, it illustrates how managers (even good ones) can suffer from social astigmatism in that they fail to recognize disparities in outcomes by focusing only on universally salient policies at the expense of disadvantaged groups. Chapter IV suggests that political representation may help draw managerial attention to otherwise ignored discrepancies within their organizations. This dissertation also addresses the public management literature by incorporating management decisions and behavior (e.g. managerial networking, delegating practices) in examining political influence. Again, much of this literature ignores management; by including management, our understanding of political-bureaucratic interaction is more complete.

In sum, three theoretical contributions stand out. First, it appears that elected institutions do engage in political assessment. School board involvement with

administration was significantly higher when past bureaucratic failure was present, suggesting that political actors are responsive to bureaucratic outputs and outcomes. This provides empirical support for the leading theoretical models of public policy. Yet, rather than being universally the case, political assessment appears to be conditional on the salience of the policy. The evidence suggests that political actors were only responsive to failure if that failure pertained to universally salient policy outcomes. Policy areas that were less salient – or salient to particular groups – were largely ignored. These findings highlight the role of issue salience in policy making. The general models of public policy are just that – general – and as such they may only be applicable to policy areas that are generally salient. In the case of less salient policy areas, it appears that political actors are not responsive, as some public administration scholars suggest (e.g. Caiden 1991; Dunsire and Hood 1989).

The second key theoretical contribution pertains to representation as it relates to political assessment and policy outcomes for minority groups. As noted above, politicians were generally unresponsive to bureaucratic failure, if the failure was specific to minority groups (Latinos and African-Americans). However, when the interests of these groups are represented in the elected body, we see a different story. The evidence in Chapter IV suggests that the likelihood of political intervention is completely dependent the level of Latino-specific failure but only if Latino representation is present. The behavior of school boards with no Latinos, however, does not change at all regardless of Latino student performance. This provides compelling evidence for the importance of representation.

Finally, this project puts bureaucracy back into the study of bureaucratic responsiveness to political institutions. While central in the formal models of political control, the empirical literature on political influence of bureaucratic policy outcomes rarely directly accounts for the bureaucracy itself. When the bureaucracy is incorporated, this study finds that the extent to which political actors get what they want is conditional on value alignment with the bureaucracy as well as bureaucratic independence – two findings that support past theoretical work.

**Caveats**

These results provide some tentative answers to the important questions in political science and public administration. However, caution should be taken in generalizing these finding to other cases. First, these findings are based on Texas school districts, which have a particular type of political-administrative system that is distinct from the federal government. School boards are single-issue elected bodies and multiple principal problems – a key complication in the principal-agent literature – are not present in this setting as is the case in federal agencies. That is, while the theoretical conclusions are certainly conceptually applicable to the federal government, the evidence presented in the project should not necessarily be taken as evidence that these phenomena occur at the federal level. Rather, these findings provide greater insight to political-bureaucratic arrangements that are more similar to the school board-district structure, which may include other local governments, higher education governance systems or parliamentary systems where separation of powers is not present.

**Future Research**

These conclusions, while informative, open up a wide range of new questions for researchers. Given the relatively short period of time examined in this project, this project does not directly address the longer-term relationship between failure, political intervention and performance. Past research has consistently found that managerial networking has tangible benefits for organizational performance (e.g., Meier and O'Toole 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004; Meier, O'Toole and Nicholson-Crotty 2004; O'Toole and Meier 2003, 2004; Nicholson-Crotty and O'Toole 2004; Goerdel 2006). If increased political involvement decreases managerial networking, as is suggested in Chapter III, such interactions may have long-term implications for organizational performance, where decreases in networking may result in declines in future organizational performance. In such a case, we might expect temporary improvements in organizations that experienced political intervention due to poor past performance, yet they may experience performance problems in the longer term due to decreases in networking, which may work to sustain long-term organizational performance.

Furthermore, this research does not address exactly *how* gains in performance are obtained. There are countless ways school board members and public managers could potentially influence performance. Future research should examine what policies and strategies work best at improving the performance of failing organizations. As some policy outcomes are easier to manipulate than others, the question becomes whether the gains in performance are real, or are managers manipulating performance indicators as a

means of coping with political pressure. Indeed, there are numerous ways superintendents can cheat, including via the strategic tracking of students to classifications that will not count toward the districts accountability ratings. Future research should examine this important question of whether managers are simply cheating as a means to placate elected officials – the answer to which has important implications for empirical research on political control as well public administration in practical terms.

With respect to the relationship between political assessment and representation (Chapter IV), there are still may unanswered questions that warrant attention. Better data on the activities, motivations, and preferences of public managers and elected officials are needed to get a better handle on what role race and ethnicity plays in the decision-making calculus of policy makers (both elected and bureaucratic). Without precise data and measures, we are left to assume what these interactions between elected officials and bureaucrats involve and what motivations and objectives drive political-administrative contact. While perhaps less so than much of the past work on descriptive and substantive representation, the policy process is still largely treated as a black box where we observe inputs, some management, and outputs. More research is needed on what policies are adopted and – with respect to the importance of representation – what it is that representatives are actually doing in terms of policies to improve the plight of those they represent. These are just a few of many questions that remain unanswered, and that future research should address.

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**Table 5.5. Baseline Models of Political Influence**

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | Latino AP % Taken | % Latino Taking SAT | Latino AP % Students | Latino AP % Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.068 | 0.053 | 0.001 | 0.123 | 0.062 | 0.037 | 0.148 | 0.038 | 0.028 | 0.024 |
| | (0.011)** | (0.014)** | (0.001) | (0.023)** | (0.009)** | (0.009)** | (0.020)** | (0.031) | (0.024) | (0.010)* |
| Lagged DV | 0.316 | 0.255 | 0.606 | 0.210 | 0.300 | 0.364 | 0.344 | 0.395 | 0.363 | 0.149 |
| | (0.014)** | (0.027)** | (0.018)** | (0.016)** | (0.022)** | (0.035)** | (0.025)** | (0.045)** | (0.040)** | (0.031)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.861 | 0.982 | 0.305 | 0.687 | 0.459 | 0.324 | 0.382 | 0.446 | 0.423 | 0.216 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.012)** | (0.019)** | (0.026)** | (0.025)** | (0.019)** | (0.026)** | (0.042)** | (0.041)** | (0.025)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.052 | 0.129 | 0.007 | 0.141 | 0.070 | -0.005 | -0.021 | 0.051 | -0.002 | -0.165 |
| | (0.017)** | (0.024)** | (0.001)** | (0.034)** | (0.013)** | (0.013) | (0.034) | (0.065) | (0.052) | (0.025)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.126 | -0.132 | -0.008 | -0.190 | -0.105 | -0.032 | -0.092 | -0.117 | -0.073 | -0.022 |
| | (0.014)** | (0.020)** | (0.001)** | (0.031)** | (0.012)** | (0.011)** | (0.030)** | (0.058)* | (0.045) | (0.021) |
| % Black Students | -0.065 | -0.087 | -0.002 | -0.126 | -0.079 | -0.026 | -0.138 | -0.107 | -0.050 | -0.037 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.028)** | (0.001) | (0.038)** | (0.012)** | (0.013)* | (0.035)** | (0.069) | (0.055) | (0.028) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | -0.001 | -0.069 | 0.007 | 0.461 | -0.096 | -0.031 | -0.479 | -0.001 | 0.376 | 0.194 |
| | (0.091) | (0.150) | (0.005) | (0.252) | (0.069) | (0.078) | (0.213)* | (0.396) | (0.320) | (0.136) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.005 | 0.132 | 0.008 | 0.321 | 0.027 | 0.009 | 0.066 | -0.053 | 0.033 | -0.041 |
| | (0.040) | (0.063)* | (0.002)** | (0.089)** | (0.029) | (0.025) | (0.081) | (0.170) | (0.130) | (0.053) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.014 | 0.075 | 0.004 | 0.187 | 0.035 | 0.046 | 0.049 | 0.097 | 0.039 | 0.079 |
| | (0.017) | (0.028)** | (0.001)** | (0.042)** | (0.014)* | (0.014)** | (0.037) | (0.070) | (0.059) | (0.030)** |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.039 | -0.097 | -0.005 | -0.008 | -0.072 | -0.056 | -0.006 | -0.120 | -0.094 | 0.004 |
| | (0.031) | (0.051) | (0.002)* | (0.078) | (0.024)** | (0.032) | (0.069) | (0.123) | (0.094) | (0.047) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)* | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000)** |
| Constant | -19.550 | -41.486 | 7.875 | -30.044 | -3.030 | -1.868 | -3.508 | -5.688 | -4.786 | -6.819 |
| | (4.165)** | (5.463)** | (1.686)** | (6.620)** | (2.216) | (3.118) | (6.281) | (10.830) | (9.327) | (4.068) |
| Observations | 5619 | 2848 | 4907 | 2213 | 4256 | 2697 | 2921 | 753 | 886 | 2126 |
| R-squared | 0.65 | 0.80 | 0.60 | 0.56 | 0.43 | 0.58 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.37 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

**Table 5.6. Supportive Executive**

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | % Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.071 | 0.035 | -0.000 | 0.112 | 0.054 | 0.026 | 0.130 | 0.008 | 0.011 | 0.010 |
| | (0.016)** | (0.018)* | (0.001) | (0.030)** | (0.010)** | (0.009)** | (0.025)** | (0.044) | (0.035) | (0.013) |
| Latino Superintendent | 2.667 | -1.374 | 0.087 | 7.252 | 2.067 | 0.980 | 2.518 | 0.132 | -0.407 | 0.048 |
| | (0.972)** | (1.718) | (0.069) | (2.351)** | (0.928)* | (0.925) | (2.319) | (2.716) | (2.558) | (0.904) |
| Rep. × Latino Super | -0.029 | 0.043 | 0.000 | -0.046 | -0.006 | 0.010 | 0.011 | 0.040 | 0.027 | 0.025 |
| | (0.020) | (0.028) | (0.001) | (0.043) | (0.017) | (0.019) | (0.036) | (0.050) | (0.042) | (0.016) |
| Lagged DV | 0.317 | 0.256 | 0.607 | 0.208 | 0.300 | 0.361 | 0.342 | 0.393 | 0.362 | 0.146 |
| | (0.014)** | (0.027)** | (0.018)** | (0.016)** | (0.022)** | (0.034)** | (0.025)** | (0.045)** | (0.040)** | (0.031)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.861 | 0.981 | 0.307 | 0.686 | 0.460 | 0.322 | 0.384 | 0.447 | 0.425 | 0.216 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.012)** | (0.019)** | (0.025)** | (0.025)** | (0.019)** | (0.026)** | (0.042)** | (0.041)** | (0.025)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.050 | 0.127 | 0.007 | 0.136 | 0.067 | -0.009 | -0.026 | 0.047 | -0.004 | -0.171 |
| | (0.017)** | (0.024)** | (0.001)** | (0.035)** | (0.013)** | (0.014) | (0.034) | (0.065) | (0.052) | (0.025)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.131 | -0.128 | -0.008 | -0.206 | -0.108 | -0.032 | -0.098 | -0.113 | -0.069 | -0.019 |
| | (0.015)** | (0.021)** | (0.001)** | (0.033)** | (0.012)** | (0.011)** | (0.032)** | (0.061) | (0.048) | (0.022) |
| % Black Students | -0.064 | -0.088 | -0.002 | -0.121 | -0.076 | -0.023 | -0.135 | -0.105 | -0.049 | -0.036 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.028)** | (0.001) | (0.038)** | (0.012)** | (0.013) | (0.035)** | (0.070) | (0.055) | (0.028) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | -0.026 | -0.079 | 0.006 | 0.341 | -0.124 | -0.054 | -0.549 | 0.001 | 0.373 | 0.153 |
| | (0.094) | (0.151) | (0.005) | (0.253) | (0.069) | (0.079) | (0.219)* | (0.397) | (0.319) | (0.140) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.002 | 0.136 | 0.008 | 0.330 | 0.028 | 0.011 | 0.072 | -0.054 | 0.031 | -0.038 |
| | (0.040) | (0.063)* | (0.002)** | (0.088)** | (0.029) | (0.025) | (0.081) | (0.175) | (0.132) | (0.054) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.015 | 0.074 | 0.005 | 0.191 | 0.037 | 0.047 | 0.052 | 0.096 | 0.040 | 0.081 |
| | (0.017) | (0.028)** | (0.001)** | (0.042)** | (0.014)* | (0.014)** | (0.037) | (0.070) | (0.059) | (0.030)** |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.038 | -0.093 | -0.005 | 0.013 | -0.068 | -0.052 | 0.001 | -0.118 | -0.095 | 0.008 |
| | (0.031) | (0.051) | (0.002)* | (0.078) | (0.024)** | (0.031) | (0.069) | (0.124) | (0.094) | (0.047) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)* | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000)** |
| Constant | -19.464 | -41.362 | 7.558 | -29.412 | -3.071 | -1.751 | -2.751 | -5.385 | -4.731 | -6.522 |
| | (4.147)** | (5.484)** | (1.696)** | (6.614)** | (2.205) | (3.118) | (6.268) | (10.828) | (9.343) | (4.104) |
| Observations | 5606 | 2841 | 4893 | 2212 | 4246 | 2696 | 2919 | 753 | 886 | 2123 |
| R-squared | 0.65 | 0.80 | 0.60 | 0.57 | 0.43 | 0.58 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.38 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

## Table 5.7. Supportive Bureaucracy

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | % Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.059 | 0.029 | -0.003 | 0.069 | 0.040 | -0.003 | 0.082 | -0.148 | -0.127 | -0.000 |
| | (0.019)** | (0.024) | (0.001)** | (0.040) | (0.013)** | (0.013) | (0.032)* | (0.065)* | (0.053)* | (0.018) |
| % Latino Teachers | 0.113 | -0.011 | 0.000 | 0.300 | 0.081 | 0.051 | 0.292 | -0.057 | -0.046 | 0.071 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.039) | (0.002) | (0.048)** | (0.021)** | (0.019)** | (0.052)** | (0.082) | (0.066) | (0.023)** |
| Rep. x Latino Teachers | -0.001 | 0.001 | 0.000 | -0.001 | -0.000 | 0.000 | -0.001 | 0.003 | 0.003 | -0.000 |
| | (0.000)* | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.001) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.001) | (0.001)** | (0.001)** | (0.000) |
| Lagged DV | 0.315 | 0.255 | 0.601 | 0.678 | 0.294 | 0.353 | 0.321 | 0.380 | 0.354 | 0.141 |
| | (0.014)** | (0.027)** | (0.018)** | (0.026)** | (0.022)** | (0.035)** | (0.025)** | (0.044)** | (0.040)** | (0.030)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.863 | 0.981 | 0.311 | 0.203 | 0.464 | 0.321 | 0.388 | 0.449 | 0.429 | 0.216 |
| | (0.020)** | (0.012)** | (0.019)** | (0.016)** | (0.025)** | (0.019)** | (0.026)** | (0.042)** | (0.041)** | (0.025)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.050 | 0.125 | 0.007 | 0.138 | 0.065 | -0.013 | -0.027 | 0.022 | -0.024 | -0.168 |
| | (0.017)** | (0.024)** | (0.001)** | (0.035)** | (0.013)** | (0.014) | (0.035) | (0.064) | (0.052) | (0.025)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.157 | -0.127 | -0.008 | -0.289 | -0.127 | -0.044 | -0.201 | -0.071 | -0.033 | -0.052 |
| | (0.016)** | (0.025)** | (0.001)** | (0.039)** | (0.013)** | (0.012)** | (0.037)** | (0.076) | (0.062) | (0.025)* |
| % Black Students | -0.061 | -0.084 | -0.001 | -0.112 | -0.072 | -0.019 | -0.127 | -0.076 | -0.024 | -0.033 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.028)** | (0.001) | (0.039)** | (0.012)** | (0.013) | (0.035)** | (0.071) | (0.056) | (0.027) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | -0.073 | -0.092 | 0.004 | 0.034 | -0.176 | -0.124 | -1.011 | -0.042 | 0.353 | 0.037 |
| | (0.090) | (0.157) | (0.005) | (0.259) | (0.071)* | (0.079) | (0.222)** | (0.399) | (0.330) | (0.146) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.008 | 0.133 | 0.008 | 0.324 | 0.024 | 0.007 | 0.060 | -0.118 | -0.016 | -0.041 |
| | (0.039) | (0.063)* | (0.002)** | (0.089)** | (0.029) | (0.025) | (0.081) | (0.165) | (0.125) | (0.053) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.012 | 0.074 | 0.004 | 0.186 | 0.033 | 0.046 | 0.053 | 0.068 | 0.016 | 0.080 |
| | (0.017) | (0.028)** | (0.001)** | (0.042)** | (0.014)* | (0.014)** | (0.037) | (0.071) | (0.060) | (0.029)** |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.027 | -0.096 | -0.005 | 0.046 | -0.060 | -0.046 | 0.051 | -0.135 | -0.106 | 0.024 |
| | (0.030) | (0.052) | (0.002)* | (0.078) | (0.024)* | (0.032) | (0.068) | (0.126) | (0.095) | (0.048) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)* | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000)** |
| Constant | -17.552 | -41.100 | 7.861 | -21.666 | -1.189 | -0.153 | 5.950 | -1.469 | -1.577 | -3.567 |
| | (4.170)** | (5.563)** | (1.701)** | (6.801)** | (2.216) | (3.146) | (6.405) | (10.553) | (9.292) | (4.154) |
| Observations | 5619 | 2848 | 4907 | 2213 | 4256 | 2697 | 2921 | 753 | 886 | 2126 |
| R-squared | 0.65 | 0.80 | 0.60 | 0.57 | 0.44 | 0.58 | 0.37 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.38 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

## Table 5.8. School Board Support

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.099 | 0.146 | 0.005 | 0.083 | 0.039 | -0.028 | 0.159 | 0.015 | 0.076 | 0.050 |
| | (0.050) | (0.087) | (0.002)* | (0.093) | (0.031) | (0.039) | (0.079)* | (0.183) | (0.149) | (0.054) |
| School Board Support | -0.252 | -0.080 | 0.024 | 0.006 | -0.114 | -0.319 | 0.339 | 0.097 | 0.408 | -0.202 |
| | (0.281) | (0.501) | (0.018) | (0.692) | (0.242) | (0.349) | (0.620) | (1.214) | (1.054) | (0.435) |
| Rep. x SB Support | -0.008 | -0.021 | -0.001 | 0.007 | 0.004 | 0.014 | -0.016 | 0.004 | -0.008 | -0.012 |
| | (0.011) | (0.021) | (0.001) | (0.021) | (0.007) | (0.009) | (0.018) | (0.042) | (0.034) | (0.012) |
| Lagged DV | 0.332 | 0.281 | 0.639 | 0.230 | 0.306 | 0.384 | 0.363 | 0.378 | 0.364 | 0.146 |
| | (0.020)** | (0.033)** | (0.022)** | (0.023)** | (0.032)** | (0.041)** | (0.032)** | (0.059)** | (0.055)** | (0.039)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.857 | 0.987 | 0.281 | 0.669 | 0.456 | 0.292 | 0.376 | 0.470 | 0.462 | 0.256 |
| | (0.028)** | (0.016)** | (0.022)** | (0.037)** | (0.036)** | (0.023)** | (0.035)** | (0.058)** | (0.063)** | (0.034)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.071 | 0.145 | 0.005 | 0.228 | 0.068 | -0.018 | 0.034 | 0.033 | 0.035 | -0.136 |
| | (0.023)** | (0.028)** | (0.002)** | (0.046)** | (0.017)** | (0.018) | (0.046) | (0.086) | (0.075) | (0.032)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.136 | -0.155 | -0.006 | -0.249 | -0.097 | -0.022 | -0.106 | -0.090 | -0.108 | -0.032 |
| | (0.020)** | (0.022)** | (0.001)** | (0.041)** | (0.015)** | (0.015) | (0.042)* | (0.074) | (0.058) | (0.027) |
| % Black Students | -0.065 | -0.065 | -0.001 | -0.188 | -0.090 | -0.028 | -0.182 | -0.024 | -0.058 | -0.092 |
| | (0.027)* | (0.039) | (0.002) | (0.057)** | (0.016)** | (0.018) | (0.050)** | (0.099) | (0.081) | (0.034)** |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.135 | 0.110 | 0.003 | 0.464 | -0.114 | 0.130 | -0.244 | 0.194 | 0.227 | 0.217 |
| | (0.114) | (0.165) | (0.007) | (0.332) | (0.090) | (0.098) | (0.294) | (0.590) | (0.444) | (0.170) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.059 | 0.126 | 0.007 | 0.178 | 0.014 | -0.036 | 0.041 | -0.372 | -0.196 | -0.110 |
| | (0.057) | (0.079) | (0.003)* | (0.124) | (0.041) | (0.041) | (0.123) | (0.225) | (0.174) | (0.077) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.023 | 0.078 | 0.005 | 0.256 | 0.041 | 0.051 | 0.079 | 0.081 | 0.094 | 0.120 |
| | (0.024) | (0.034)* | (0.002)** | (0.057)** | (0.020)* | (0.018)** | (0.052) | (0.113) | (0.092) | (0.040)** |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.038 | -0.102 | -0.006 | 0.031 | -0.084 | -0.013 | 0.060 | -0.178 | -0.146 | 0.040 |
| | (0.042) | (0.066) | (0.003)* | (0.105) | (0.033)* | (0.037) | (0.096) | (0.153) | (0.134) | (0.058) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000)* | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000)* |
| Constant | -19.857 | -47.673 | 7.040 | -40.362 | -2.037 | -2.489 | -15.900 | -0.287 | 3.081 | -7.314 |
| | (5.458)** | (6.860)** | (2.233)** | (9.499)** | (2.973) | (4.230) | (9.018) | (15.225) | (13.294) | (5.807) |
| Observations | 2828 | 1560 | 2526 | 1193 | 2245 | 1443 | 1562 | 399 | 486 | 1164 |
| R-squared | 0.66 | 0.82 | 0.63 | 0.55 | 0.45 | 0.59 | 0.35 | 0.66 | 0.65 | 0.39 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

## Table 5.9. Networking

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | % Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.071 | 0.062 | 0.001 | 0.104 | 0.061 | 0.029 | 0.092 | 0.023 | 0.051 | -0.005 |
| | (0.014)** | (0.017)** | (0.001) | (0.032)** | (0.012)** | (0.011)** | (0.026)** | (0.040) | (0.031) | (0.014) |
| Managerial Networking | -0.295 | -0.636 | -0.018 | 1.436 | 0.169 | -0.173 | 0.325 | 2.292 | 0.902 | 0.460 |
| | (0.249) | (0.388) | (0.019) | (0.638)* | (0.190) | (0.211) | (0.557) | (1.298) | (0.967) | (0.385) |
| Rep. x Networking | -0.010 | -0.027 | -0.001 | -0.002 | -0.013 | -0.003 | -0.001 | -0.096 | -0.062 | -0.005 |
| | (0.015) | (0.018) | (0.001) | (0.026) | (0.008) | (0.010) | (0.021) | (0.036)** | (0.030)* | (0.012) |
| Lagged DV | 0.325 | 0.291 | 0.645 | 0.217 | 0.308 | 0.387 | 0.357 | 0.360 | 0.354 | 0.157 |
| | (0.022)** | (0.033)** | (0.023)** | (0.023)** | (0.033)** | (0.041)** | (0.033)** | (0.059)** | (0.056)** | (0.040)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.855 | 0.979 | 0.276 | 0.676 | 0.452 | 0.275 | 0.378 | 0.482 | 0.485 | 0.241 |
| | (0.028)** | (0.017)** | (0.022)** | (0.037)** | (0.038)** | (0.020)** | (0.035)** | (0.059)** | (0.063)** | (0.031)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.068 | 0.152 | 0.006 | 0.226 | 0.067 | -0.016 | 0.027 | 0.004 | 0.036 | -0.148 |
| | (0.024)** | (0.029)** | (0.002)** | (0.047)** | (0.018)** | (0.019) | (0.047) | (0.087) | (0.079) | (0.034)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.139 | -0.160 | -0.007 | -0.248 | -0.100 | -0.019 | -0.107 | -0.074 | -0.127 | -0.013 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.023)** | (0.001)** | (0.042)** | (0.016)** | (0.015) | (0.044)* | (0.074) | (0.060)* | (0.028) |
| % Black Students | -0.070 | -0.068 | -0.001 | -0.206 | -0.092 | -0.020 | -0.188 | -0.010 | -0.052 | -0.075 |
| | (0.028)* | (0.040) | (0.002) | (0.059)** | (0.017)** | (0.017) | (0.052)** | (0.100) | (0.082) | (0.033)* |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.031 | 0.085 | 0.004 | 0.402 | -0.171 | 0.092 | -0.292 | 0.181 | 0.179 | 0.251 |
| | (0.114) | (0.175) | (0.007) | (0.331) | (0.093) | (0.101) | (0.301) | (0.592) | (0.445) | (0.173) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.074 | 0.148 | 0.007 | 0.206 | 0.014 | -0.028 | 0.063 | -0.457 | -0.251 | -0.101 |
| | (0.057) | (0.080) | (0.003)* | (0.125) | (0.042) | (0.041) | (0.126) | (0.232) | (0.188) | (0.077) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.034 | 0.086 | 0.005 | 0.269 | 0.044 | 0.048 | 0.077 | 0.086 | 0.105 | 0.093 |
| | (0.025) | (0.035)* | (0.002)** | (0.056)** | (0.020)* | (0.017)** | (0.052) | (0.115) | (0.092) | (0.040)* |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.047 | -0.057 | -0.006 | -0.032 | -0.086 | -0.001 | 0.069 | -0.302 | -0.179 | 0.013 |
| | (0.041) | (0.070) | (0.003)* | (0.107) | (0.036)* | (0.038) | (0.101) | (0.169) | (0.143) | (0.060) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000)* | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Constant | -19.412 | -52.751 | 7.070 | -37.348 | -2.610 | -5.549 | -13.380 | 8.343 | 7.304 | -3.352 |
| | (5.650)** | (7.185)** | (2.261)** | (9.148)** | (3.061) | (3.715) | (8.990) | (15.940) | (13.436) | (5.013) |
| Observations | 2691 | 1509 | 2414 | 1151 | 2151 | 1391 | 1517 | 383 | 463 | 1120 |
| R-squared | 0.67 | 0.82 | 0.63 | 0.55 | 0.45 | 0.58 | 0.35 | 0.66 | 0.66 | 0.38 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

## Table 5.10. Entrenchment

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | % Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.088 | 0.074 | 0.002 | 0.122 | 0.057 | 0.024 | 0.099 | 0.056 | 0.047 | -0.007 |
| | (0.020)** | (0.021)** | (0.001) | (0.039)** | (0.015)** | (0.014) | (0.035)** | (0.050) | (0.040) | (0.018) |
| Years as Superintendent | 0.116 | -0.254 | -0.000 | -0.154 | -0.020 | -0.016 | -0.038 | 0.283 | 0.010 | -0.056 |
| | (0.044)** | (0.073)** | (0.003) | (0.121) | (0.032) | (0.043) | (0.097) | (0.209) | (0.176) | (0.068) |
| Rep. x Years as SI | -0.004 | -0.003 | -0.000 | -0.002 | -0.000 | 0.002 | -0.001 | -0.008 | 0.001 | 0.001 |
| | (0.003) | (0.003) | (0.000) | (0.007) | (0.002) | (0.002) | (0.005) | (0.009) | (0.009) | (0.003) |
| Lagged DV | 0.330 | 0.272 | 0.640 | 0.224 | 0.307 | 0.379 | 0.361 | 0.369 | 0.363 | 0.151 |
| | (0.020)** | (0.034)** | (0.022)** | (0.024)** | (0.032)** | (0.042)** | (0.032)** | (0.061)** | (0.055)** | (0.040)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.844 | 0.969 | 0.284 | 0.667 | 0.460 | 0.298 | 0.384 | 0.483 | 0.463 | 0.261 |
| | (0.028)** | (0.017)** | (0.022)** | (0.036)** | (0.036)** | (0.023)** | (0.035)** | (0.059)** | (0.064)** | (0.034)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.068 | 0.129 | 0.005 | 0.230 | 0.072 | -0.014 | 0.040 | 0.046 | 0.017 | -0.131 |
| | (0.023)** | (0.028)** | (0.002)** | (0.046)** | (0.017)** | (0.018) | (0.046) | (0.088) | (0.075) | (0.032)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.132 | -0.153 | -0.006 | -0.250 | -0.099 | -0.025 | -0.113 | -0.088 | -0.100 | -0.030 |
| | (0.020)** | (0.022)** | (0.001)** | (0.042)** | (0.015)** | (0.015) | (0.042)** | (0.075) | (0.059) | (0.027) |
| % Black Students | -0.059 | -0.066 | -0.001 | -0.193 | -0.093 | -0.028 | -0.192 | -0.034 | -0.053 | -0.088 |
| | (0.027)* | (0.039) | (0.002) | (0.057)** | (0.017)** | (0.017) | (0.050)** | (0.101) | (0.081) | (0.034)** |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.102 | 0.030 | 0.003 | 0.420 | -0.107 | 0.139 | -0.285 | 0.151 | 0.151 | 0.212 |
| | (0.112) | (0.167) | (0.007) | (0.330) | (0.090) | (0.098) | (0.296) | (0.577) | (0.429) | (0.174) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.060 | 0.148 | 0.007 | 0.184 | 0.014 | -0.037 | 0.044 | -0.423 | -0.166 | -0.115 |
| | (0.057) | (0.083) | (0.003)* | (0.125) | (0.041) | (0.041) | (0.123) | (0.236) | (0.179) | (0.077) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.018 | 0.078 | 0.005 | 0.260 | 0.043 | 0.048 | 0.082 | 0.098 | 0.101 | 0.113 |
| | (0.025) | (0.034)* | (0.002)** | (0.057)** | (0.020)* | (0.018)** | (0.053) | (0.113) | (0.091) | (0.039)** |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.053 | -0.107 | -0.006 | 0.052 | -0.081 | -0.009 | 0.060 | -0.174 | -0.147 | 0.044 |
| | (0.042) | (0.067) | (0.003)* | (0.107) | (0.034)* | (0.037) | (0.096) | (0.152) | (0.135) | (0.058) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000)* | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000)* |
| Constant | -18.474 | -42.059 | 6.785 | -40.304 | -2.885 | -3.562 | -14.021 | -0.091 | 7.392 | -8.098 |
| | (5.354)** | (7.119)** | (2.227)** | (8.746)** | (2.884) | (3.767) | (8.499) | (14.599) | (12.220) | (5.326) |
| Observations | 2796 | 1543 | 2501 | 1178 | 2224 | 1425 | 1551 | 397 | 481 | 1154 |
| R-squared | 0.66 | 0.82 | 0.63 | 0.55 | 0.46 | 0.59 | 0.35 | 0.66 | 0.65 | 0.40 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

## Table 5.11. Discretion

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | % Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.103 | 0.060 | -0.001 | 0.145 | -0.023 | 0.102 | 0.184 | -0.041 | -0.102 | -0.049 |
| | (0.040)* | (0.052) | (0.003) | (0.133) | (0.047) | (0.058) | (0.080)* | (0.154) | (0.128) | (0.046) |
| Discretion to Principals | -2.244 | -0.099 | -0.019 | -0.055 | -0.217 | -0.144 | 0.836 | -1.245 | -2.225 | -0.383 |
| | (0.289)** | (0.389) | (0.027) | (0.900) | (0.308) | (0.301) | (0.601) | (1.659) | (1.608) | (0.514) |
| Rep. x Discretion | -0.013 | -0.003 | 0.000 | -0.011 | 0.024 | -0.017 | -0.022 | 0.033 | 0.045 | 0.014 |
| | (0.011) | (0.014) | (0.001) | (0.042) | (0.016) | (0.016) | (0.023) | (0.044) | (0.038) | (0.013) |
| Lagged DV | 0.384 | 0.287 | 0.622 | 0.251 | 0.317 | 0.345 | 0.376 | 0.389 | 0.344 | 0.176 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.037)** | (0.023)** | (0.025)** | (0.034)** | (0.054)** | (0.034)** | (0.077)** | (0.071)** | (0.049)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.797 | 0.986 | 0.295 | 0.637 | 0.440 | 0.307 | 0.429 | 0.501 | 0.486 | 0.214 |
| | (0.029)** | (0.017)** | (0.025)** | (0.044)** | (0.040)** | (0.026)** | (0.039)** | (0.071)** | (0.070)** | (0.037)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.059 | 0.147 | 0.004 | 0.198 | 0.063 | -0.007 | 0.110 | -0.012 | 0.043 | -0.138 |
| | (0.024)* | (0.033)** | (0.002)* | (0.050)** | (0.019)** | (0.019) | (0.045)* | (0.116) | (0.090) | (0.038)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.122 | -0.149 | -0.006 | -0.209 | -0.088 | -0.027 | -0.159 | -0.040 | -0.078 | -0.030 |
| | (0.019)** | (0.026)** | (0.001)** | (0.048)** | (0.017)** | (0.017) | (0.041)** | (0.090) | (0.067) | (0.031) |
| % Black Students | -0.062 | -0.062 | -0.000 | -0.180 | -0.075 | -0.029 | -0.239 | 0.072 | -0.062 | -0.091 |
| | (0.028)* | (0.049) | (0.002) | (0.069)** | (0.018)** | (0.021) | (0.057)** | (0.149) | (0.115) | (0.040)* |
| Student Teacher Ratio | 0.131 | -0.000 | 0.003 | 0.350 | -0.129 | -0.009 | 0.121 | 0.151 | 0.559 | 0.218 |
| | (0.119) | (0.172) | (0.007) | (0.370) | (0.101) | (0.095) | (0.306) | (0.687) | (0.521) | (0.187) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.002 | 0.228 | 0.014 | 0.234 | 0.066 | 0.018 | 0.080 | -0.194 | -0.062 | -0.060 |
| | (0.049) | (0.093)* | (0.003)** | (0.136) | (0.047) | (0.036) | (0.129) | (0.250) | (0.185) | (0.081) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.023 | 0.085 | 0.005 | 0.196 | 0.026 | 0.049 | 0.068 | 0.062 | 0.139 | 0.103 |
| | (0.027) | (0.037)* | (0.002)** | (0.061)** | (0.020) | (0.021)* | (0.059) | (0.128) | (0.101) | (0.044)* |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.074 | -0.143 | -0.003 | -0.021 | -0.102 | -0.051 | -0.047 | -0.015 | 0.024 | 0.058 |
| | (0.045) | (0.074) | (0.003) | (0.117) | (0.037)** | (0.042) | (0.099) | (0.165) | (0.149) | (0.062) |
| Average Teacher Salary | -0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | -0.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000)* | (0.000) | (0.000)* | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) |
| Constant | -10.162 | -48.572 | 7.382 | -28.998 | 0.290 | -2.109 | -21.595 | 10.413 | 6.775 | -2.895 |
| | (5.609) | (8.106)** | (2.234)** | (10.851)** | (3.279) | (4.161) | (9.611)* | (17.245) | (13.623) | (5.982) |
| Observations | 2432 | 1311 | 2178 | 982 | 1938 | 1188 | 1344 | 341 | 410 | 988 |
| R-squared | 0.68 | 0.83 | 0.62 | 0.55 | 0.44 | 0.58 | 0.37 | 0.66 | 0.63 | 0.35 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

## Table 5.12. Budget Autonomy

| | Latino TAKS Pass Rate | Latino Graduation | Latino Attendance | Latino Recommend | Latino Advance Courses | % Latino Advanced Placement | % Latino Taking SAT | % Latino Students Pass AP | % Latino AP Scores Above Criterion | Latino SAT Above 1110 Criterion |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Latino Representation | 0.081 | 0.058 | -0.003 | 0.042 | 0.037 | 0.047 | 0.128 | -0.213 | -0.135 | -0.033 |
| | (0.030)** | (0.032) | (0.002) | (0.077) | (0.026) | (0.027) | (0.056)* | (0.090)* | (0.072) | (0.031) |
| % Non-Local Revenue | 0.033 | 0.027 | -0.001 | 0.006 | 0.005 | 0.020 | 0.057 | -0.098 | -0.075 | -0.037 |
| | (0.009)** | (0.013)* | (0.001) | (0.027) | (0.008) | (0.010)* | (0.021)** | (0.035)** | (0.030)* | (0.016)* |
| Rep x Non-Local Revenue | -0.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | -0.000 | 0.000 | 0.004 | 0.002 | 0.001 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.001) | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.001) | (0.001)** | (0.001)** | (0.000)* |
| Lagged DV | 0.315 | 0.252 | 0.605 | 0.687 | 0.300 | 0.363 | 0.339 | 0.386 | 0.357 | 0.144 |
| | (0.014)** | (0.027)** | (0.018)** | (0.026)** | (0.022)** | (0.034)** | (0.025)** | (0.045)** | (0.040)** | (0.030)** |
| Anglo Performance | 0.862 | 0.982 | 0.306 | 0.210 | 0.460 | 0.325 | 0.385 | 0.438 | 0.415 | 0.209 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.012)** | (0.019)** | (0.016)** | (0.026)** | (0.019)** | (0.026)** | (0.042)** | (0.042)** | (0.025)** |
| % Low Income Students | 0.036 | 0.115 | 0.007 | 0.126 | 0.064 | -0.015 | -0.060 | 0.048 | 0.002 | -0.156 |
| | (0.018)* | (0.025)** | (0.001)** | (0.038)** | (0.013)** | (0.014) | (0.037) | (0.066) | (0.053) | (0.026)** |
| % Latino Students | -0.121 | -0.129 | -0.008 | -0.184 | -0.103 | -0.030 | -0.084 | -0.086 | -0.057 | -0.021 |
| | (0.015)** | (0.020)** | (0.001)** | (0.031)** | (0.012)** | (0.011)** | (0.030)** | (0.060) | (0.045) | (0.021) |
| % Black Students | -0.060 | -0.083 | -0.001 | -0.117 | -0.075 | -0.022 | -0.122 | -0.070 | -0.030 | -0.036 |
| | (0.021)** | (0.028)** | (0.001) | (0.039)** | (0.012)** | (0.013) | (0.035)** | (0.071) | (0.055) | (0.027) |
| Student Teacher Ratio | -0.062 | -0.123 | 0.005 | 0.371 | -0.130 | -0.059 | -0.644 | -0.003 | 0.373 | 0.207 |
| | (0.091) | (0.159) | (0.006) | (0.259) | (0.068) | (0.083) | (0.222)** | (0.394) | (0.321) | (0.147) |
| % Non-Certified Teachers | -0.008 | 0.135 | 0.008 | 0.322 | 0.027 | 0.012 | 0.073 | -0.045 | 0.040 | -0.044 |
| | (0.040) | (0.063)* | (0.002)** | (0.089)** | (0.029) | (0.025) | (0.081) | (0.172) | (0.129) | (0.053) |
| % Low-Experience Teachers | 0.018 | 0.074 | 0.004 | 0.186 | 0.035 | 0.046 | 0.047 | 0.054 | 0.017 | 0.078 |
| | (0.017) | (0.028)** | (0.001)** | (0.042)** | (0.014)* | (0.014)** | (0.037) | (0.073) | (0.059) | (0.029)** |
| Instructional Expenditures | -0.065 | -0.116 | -0.004 | -0.016 | -0.077 | -0.070 | -0.054 | -0.080 | -0.062 | 0.033 |
| | (0.031)* | (0.052)* | (0.002)* | (0.078) | (0.024)** | (0.033)* | (0.070) | (0.124) | (0.095) | (0.050) |
| Average Teacher Salary | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.001 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | (0.000) | (0.000)** | (0.000)** | (0.000)* | (0.000)** | (0.000)* | (0.000)** | (0.000) | (0.000) | (0.000)** |
| Constant | -22.277 | -43.640 | 8.019 | -29.492 | -3.284 | -3.519 | -8.154 | 3.004 | 1.856 | -3.527 |
| | (4.233)** | (5.531)** | (1.693)** | (7.302)** | (2.399) | (3.220) | (6.368) | (10.966) | (9.816) | (4.292) |
| Observations | 5618 | 2848 | 4906 | 2212 | 4255 | 2696 | 2920 | 752 | 885 | 2125 |
| R-squared | 0.65 | 0.80 | 0.60 | 0.56 | 0.43 | 0.58 | 0.36 | 0.63 | 0.63 | 0.38 |

(Robust standard errors clustered by district in parentheses) ‡ significant at p<.1 (0ne-tailed) † significant at p<.05 (0ne-tailed) * significant at p<.05(two-tailed); ** significant at p<.01(two-tailed)

# VITA


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